



1-1-2016

Romantic Periodicals and the Invention of the Living Author

Christine Marie Woody

University of Pennsylvania, cwoody@sas.upenn.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations>

Recommended Citation

Woody, Christine Marie, "Romantic Periodicals and the Invention of the Living Author" (2016). *Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations*. 2102.

<http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/2102>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. <http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/2102>

For more information, please contact libraryrepository@pobox.upenn.edu.

Romantic Periodicals and the Invention of the Living Author

Abstract

ROMANTIC PERIODICALS AND THE INVENTION OF THE LIVING AUTHOR

Christine Marie Woody

Michael Gamer

This dissertation asks how the burgeoning market of magazines, book reviews, and newspapers shapes the practice and meaning of authorship during the Romantic period. Surveying the innovations in and conventions of British periodical culture between 1802 and 1830, this study emphasizes the importance of four main periodicals—the Edinburgh Review, Quarterly Review, London Magazine, and Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine—to the period’s understanding of what it means to be, or read, an author who is still living. In it, I argue that British periodicals undertook a project to theorize, narrativize, and regulate the deceptively simple concept of a living author. Periodicals confronted the inadequacy of their critical methods in dealing with the living and came to define the “living author” as a disturbing model for the everyday person—an encouragement to self-display and a burden on public attention. Through their engagement with this disruptive figure, periodical writers eventually found in it a potential model for their own contingent, anonymous work, and embraced the self-actualizing possibilities that this reviled figure unexpectedly offered. My chapters survey crises and scandals in the periodical sphere; from the famous attacks on John Keats and Leigh Hunt, to the dismissal of female novelists like Fanny Burney, to the uproar over the political apostasies of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert Southey. Through a critical look at the book-reviewing project and other responses to living authors, I argue that the Romantic periodical invented living authorship as practice rather than ontology, emphasizing the importance of body, habit, and iterative performance to its significance.

Degree Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Graduate Group

English

First Advisor

Michael Gamer

Keywords

authorship, book history, periodicals, reception studies, Romantic, Romanticism

ROMANTIC PERIODICALS AND THE INVENTION OF THE LIVING AUTHOR

Christine Marie Woody

A DISSERTATION

in

English

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2016

Supervisor of Dissertation

Michael Gamer

Associate Professor of English

Graduate Group Chairperson

Melissa E. Sanchez

Associate Professor of English, Graduate Chair

Dissertation Committee

Paul Saint-Amour, Associate Professor of English

Peter Stallybrass, Annenberg Professor in the Humanities and Professor of English

ROMANTIC PERIODICALS AND THE INVENTION OF THE LIVING AUTHOR

COPYRIGHT

2016

Christine Marie Woody

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to my dissertation committee—Michael Gamer, Paul Saint-Amour, and Peter Stallybrass—for their wisdom and support as I completed this project. I am deeply indebted to them for their thoughtful feedback and willingness to slog through some very baggy early drafts. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Rachel Buurma, whose feedback on my second chapter was revelatory, and Laurence Lockridge and Mary Poovey, under whose guidance at New York University the seed of this project was planted.

My thanks to the English Department at the University of Pennsylvania for its support, both financial and intellectual, during the course of my degree. I am obliged to the staff of the British Library, National Library of Scotland, and New York Public Library, as well as the University of Pennsylvania's Kislak Center and New York University's Fales Library for their assistance in my research. I gratefully acknowledge support from the University of Pennsylvania's King's College Fellowship, which made my research in the United Kingdom possible, and from the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals, which allowed to me share an earlier version of my third chapter with other periodical aficionados.

Finally, a thank you to my parents, David and Diane Woody, and my husband, Ken Cushen, whose unflagging love and dogged faith helped me see my way through.

ABSTRACT

ROMANTIC PERIODICALS AND THE INVENTION OF THE LIVING AUTHOR

Christine Marie Woody

Michael Gamer

This dissertation asks how the burgeoning market of magazines, book reviews, and newspapers shapes the practice and meaning of authorship during the Romantic period. Surveying the innovations in and conventions of British periodical culture between 1802 and 1830, this study emphasizes the importance of four main periodicals—the *Edinburgh Review*, *Quarterly Review*, *London Magazine*, and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*—to the period's understanding of what it means to be, or read, an author who is still living. In it, I argue that British periodicals undertook a project to theorize, narrativize, and regulate the deceptively simple concept of a living author. Periodicals confronted the inadequacy of their critical methods in dealing with the living and came to define the “living author” as a disturbing model for the everyday person—an encouragement to self-display and a burden on public attention. Through their engagement with this disruptive figure, periodical writers eventually found in it a potential model for their own contingent, anonymous work, and embraced the self-actualizing possibilities that this reviled figure unexpectedly offered. My chapters survey crises and scandals in the periodical sphere; from the famous attacks on John Keats and Leigh Hunt, to the dismissal of female novelists like Fanny Burney, to the uproar over the political apostasies of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert Southey. Through a critical look at the book-reviewing project and other responses to living authors, I argue that the Romantic periodical invented living authorship as practice rather than ontology, emphasizing the importance of body, habit, and iterative performance to its significance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
ABSTRACT.....	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	V
LIST OF TABLES	VII
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	VIII
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: THE SYNECDOCHE AND THE REVIEW	21
I: The Synecdochic Review	26
II: The <i>Edinburgh</i> 's acid and synecdochic play	36
III: The reviewing persona – Lawyers, tyrants, and cannibals.....	46
IV: Conclusion – Surface Reading?.....	55
CHAPTER 2: THE PRACTICE OF PERSONALITY.....	62
I: “Personality” as Personal Attack.....	62
II: The Problem of the Surplus Author	69
III: Controlling the Authorship Drive	79
IV: Driving to Distraction.....	90
V: Unintended Consequences	97
CHAPTER 3: CONFRONTING THE LIVING AUTHOR.....	101
I: What is a Living Author?	102
II: Death, Neglect, and Apostasy – Narratives of Living Authorship	111
III: Reviewing “Greatness” – The Case of Walter Scott.....	130
IV: The “Living Authors” pantheon and the personal public domain	148

CHAPTER 4: PERSONA AND THE PERFORMANCE OF LIVING	153
I: Defining Periodical Persona.....	154
II: Test-Case – Thomas De Quincey and the English Opium-Eater	162
III: Living in “such a crazy body as mine”	170
IV: <i>London</i> Cockneys, or How to Consume like an Author	178
V: <i>Blackwood’s</i> and the New Cockaigne.....	187
WORKS CITED.....	200

List of Tables

<i>Fig 1.</i> Usage of terms for living authorship in the <i>British Periodicals</i> database.....	108
<i>Fig 2.</i> Google ngram illustration of the usage of terms for living authorship.....	109

List of Illustrations

<i>Fig. 3. “Death and Funeral of Mr. Southey”</i> (<i>Examiner</i> [13April 1817] 485).....	115
<i>Fig. 4. “Death and Funeral of Mr. Southey”</i> (<i>Examiner</i> [13April 1817] 486).....	116
<i>Fig 5. “First Course.—Soup”</i> (<i>BEM</i> 27:165 [April 1830] 659).....	192

Introduction

Romantic authors have long been a source of critical interest. From the often-personal book reviews of their contemporaries to Jerome McGann's formulation of the Romantic Ideology and beyond, professional readers have often been concerned with what these writers mean to their works. In this dissertation, I will propose that Romantic periodicals offer the remarkable insight that our ways of understanding the author, especially the contemporary, still-living author, are plagued by a temporal problem: How can a relationship between author and work be established, when the author is changing through the process of creating the work, and despite the work's potential fixity in publication. In "The Death of the Author," Roland Barthes draws attention to just such a problem. He writes of the temporal relationship between the idea of the author, and the book: "The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the *past* of his own book" (my italics, 1468). Barthes outlines the inadequacy of this assumed model of the author to an active and empowered reader, but it is equally problematic to the understanding of a contemporaneous career. While Barthes is concerned with a different kind of death of the author, paradoxically, it is the model of the author he *rejects* that is already dead, firmly located in the past of the work.

But for the writers of Romantic periodicals, the author was very much alive, a problematic entity to describe and contain. The solutions they formulated did not entail an anticipation of Barthes' definition of the depersonalized "scriptor"; rather, they remained resolutely, as Barthes would say, "tyrannically centered on the author" (1466). Romantic periodicals drew relentlessly, sometimes pruriently or cruelly, on authorial lives. Unable to maintain the temporal disjuncture that considers the author a part of the past—forced, by the responsiveness of their medium to consider the author instead a part of the still, unfolding present—periodicals conceived of the author as a disruptive living entity, grubby with the

quotidian details of life, who requires policing and control. But as practicing professional writers themselves, periodical contributors came to take on the mantle of living authorship, redeploying its tropes—in all their disruptive, grubby, unruliness—as a new, iterative model for the authorial self. Periodicals became the space where lived authorial existence could be examined and performed. It is with the discovery and evolution of this paradoxically problematic figure—the living author—that this dissertation will be concerned.

* * *

By 1802, the year of the founding of the *Edinburgh Review* and a watershed moment for the periodical culture of the Romantic period, the meaning of authorship had already undergone a significant adjustment. The eighteenth century had seen a rise in the number of authorial biographies, and biographical narrative had gained an increasing relevance to criticism. Authors' bodies were treated with additional interest: sometimes as physiognomic keys to their work, sometimes as relics of their art. Even authorial ephemera gained importance with the assemblage of literary archives. At the moment that Romantic periodicals began to deal seriously and innovatively with the idea of authorship, authorship itself was already a source of significant public interest.

This renovation in the understanding of authorship developed through both the editing and collection of great dead authors and self-representations of still-living ones. In its treatment of dead authors, the late-eighteenth century placed increasing importance on the (re)construction of authorial lives. As Margreta de Grazia has contended, the successive reediting of Shakespeare's works over the eighteenth century was marked by a shift from amusement at the risible anecdotes of the Bard's life to a desire to document that life and produce a clear chronology (74-6). Edmond Malone's 1790 edition of the plays included a version of

Shakespeare's life that "tells a story of the gradual acquisitions of fame, wealth, and status as documented by legal instruments and official records" (De Grazia, 137). The effort to date Shakespeare's plays in these editions was a symptom of interest in authorial life: Malone's earliest foray into Shakespeare criticism had been the "Attempt to Ascertain the Order in Which the Plays Attributed to Shakspeare Were Written", included in the first volume of George Steevens' 1778 *Plays of William Shakspeare*. Once a chronology of plays has been established, De Grazia has pointed out, it becomes possible to speculate about progression, development, or influence in new ways. Chronology individualizes the understanding of Shakespeare as an author: "The chronological schema committed the plays to a history of individual and finite creations rather than one of collective and indefinite production on [stage] and in print" (De Grazia, 151). The interpretation of the sonnets, too, was inflected by this interest in authorial life: they came to be related to Shakespeare's own life, and Shakespeare is imagined not as the dramatist who observes the world, but the poet who expresses his experience (155). In De Grazia's account, canonization, chronology, and the narration of authorial life are all intimately connected in the eighteenth-century treatment of Shakespeare.

Other canonizing efforts in the late eighteenth century displayed a similar emphasis on authorial biography. Johnson's phenomenally successful *Lives of the Poets*, which Annette Cafarelli has identified as the impetus behind "Romantic exploration of the formal qualities of biography and biography as a critical methodology", was first written for inclusion in a multivolume anthology of English poetry, only to be subsequently issued in its more famous form (Cafarelli, 33). The context of their initial composition reveals much about the *Lives*. In the wake of the 1774 *Donaldson v. Becket* verdict, the fourteen-year copyright term of the 1710 Statute of Anne was enforced for the first time, throwing the "English Stock"—a "vast, collectively owned *corpus* of 'rights' in the standard works which sustained the London [book] trade"—onto the

open market (Feather, 93). Among this stock was much of the poetry that would be constructed as great English poetry through Johnson's *Lives* and other canonizing projects like the rival *Poets of Great Britain complete from Chaucer to Churchill*, issued in 109 volumes by John Bell (1777-1783). Authorial biography provided a reading context for the reception of newly-categorized "great" English literature. Such projects naturalized biography as a critical convention, and would lead to sometime-reviewer Isaac D'Israeli's 1796 complaint that "it has now become the labour of criticism, to compose the life of an author" (97).

The eventual fate of Johnson's *Lives* as a self-contained collection is as revelatory as their connection to canonizing anthologies. Detaching the consumption of the authorial biography from its initial context of poetry-reading, the volumes of the *Lives* allows for the consumption of authorial life for its own sake. "Johnson freed biography," Annette Cafarelli has argued, "not to expect lives and works to morally coincide" (49). Rejecting the conventions of a conduct book, Johnson's *Lives* instead "distinguish[ed] writers as a literary subculture", interesting for their position as "luminaries and outsiders" (61). At the limit, this admiring approach to the dead author descended into an idolatrous excess. In 1790, renovations at the church of St. Giles in Cripplegate unearthed a body purported to be John Milton's. Over the few days that the body was exposed it was picked apart and carried home by admirers: "most of the hair had been removed from the head, as were the teeth, part of the jaw, and one hand" (Clymer, 91-2). The secular relics scavenged from the body of the great poet represent materializations of the interest in authorial life. As Lorna Clymer has argued, for the corpse to have meaning it "must be reconstituted in narrative", the human remains cannot have meaning as a body "unless narrative encases a corpse" (92). In other words, the human remains that were designated as John Milton's were made into collectible relics by the narratives of his work and life—without this designation and narrativization, the corpse is just a corpse. Finding, collecting, and being inspired by the body of

the great dead poet provides an opportunity for further mediation on the connection between the authorial person and poetic work. Keats' 1818 "Lines on seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair" provides one such opportunity, but William Cowper's indignant 1790 "Stanzas on the Late Indecent Liberties Taken with the Remains of the Great Milton" is even more revelatory of how the discourse of authorship shapes this event:

O ill-requited bard! Neglect
Thy living worth repay'd,
And blind idolatrous respect
As much affronts thee dead. (ll. 21-4)

The treatment of the great dead poet comes under scrutiny for its idolatrous approach, while the living experience of the same author is a curious blank of neglect.

Living authors, indeed, registered and influenced the developing meaning of authorship, well before the cementation of that term in endeavors like the *London Magazine's* "Living Authors" series of 1820 or Henry Colburn's *Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland* of 1816. Both in France and across the channel, Rousseau shocked readers with the personal and premature nature of his 1782 *Confessions*. Autobiography, Cafarelli notes, was more prevalent among "insignificant writers" in the early years of the Romantic period, and could be considered a sign of minority in and of itself (25). Yet Rousseau's example was powerful, leading the *Edinburgh Review* to complain in 1806:

Authors, we think, should not be encouraged to write their own lives. The genius of Rousseau, his enthusiasm, and the novelty of his plan, have rendered the *Confessions*, in some respects, the most interesting of books. But a writer, who is in full possession of his senses, who has lived in the world like the men and women who compose it, and whose vanity aims only at the praise of great talents and accomplishments, must not hope to write a book like the *Confessions*; and is scarcely to be trusted with the delineation of his own character, or the narrative of his own adventures. (*ER* 8:15 [April 1806] 108)

Goethe sets a similarly presumptive example in the construction of his own literary archive. “My manuscripts, my letters and my collections deserve the greatest attention,” he wrote, “Not for a long time will so rich and varied a collection be found for a sole individual. [...] This is the reason why I hope its conservation will be secured” (qtd. Chartier, 82). Both Rousseau’s autobiographical project and Goethe’s archival one cement the importance of authorial biography, and according to Roger Chartier they stem from the same cause as the canonizing biographies: the development of copyright. “Before the mid-eighteenth century,” Chartier explains, “authorial manuscripts are infrequent and were preserved for exceptional reasons” (74). It was only with the solidification of copyright, that the manuscript became an important concretization of the creative labor that the author had undertaken: the author’s hand not only guaranteed authenticity, it was “the nearest that one could come to a material form of an immaterial work” (Chartier, 81).

In their self-representational moves, both Rousseau and Goethe mirrored the kinds of interest in authorial life that accompanied the canonization of the dead poets—seen in the British context with the handling of Shakespeare and Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets*. Yet, the prevailing conventions of humility still prompted many to shudder at the anticipatory nature of these self-canonizing gestures. Tacitly, the work of discussing authorial life was still assumed to be the critic’s job—or as D’Israeli felt, the critic’s burden—and this work was usually conducted after the author’s death. Goethe and Rousseau’s examples were seen as a negative precedent for British culture, but their popularity nevertheless spoke volumes.

As the biography of the dead author gained importance, the still-living author came under increased scrutiny. Authors like Goethe and Rousseau, who were actively preparing their posthumous reception, were faced with charges of arrogance. Meanwhile, British Romantic poets such as Wordsworth deployed their own strategies of self-preservation through self-collection. Michael Gamer stresses the *authorial* importance of such acts of republication: poets were

“becoming institutional authors through specific revisionary practices, and through the commercial medium of a specific kind of [self-canonizing] book”.¹ Critical reception did not always succeed in divorcing personal morality from literary merit in the manner that Cafarelli has described. The construction of Burns’ life and poetic merit, for instance, remained plagued by stories of his alcoholism and sexual irregularities. In 1819, the *Quarterly Review* mourned the association of vice and poetic genius:

It is idle, and far worse than idle, prejudice of fourth, and fifth-rate minds, that profligacy is the privilege and proper evidence of talent. Because some men of real capacity have debased their genius by their want of morals, the wretched conclusion is drawn that the ordinary decencies of life were not made for superior intellects: that the temperance, the frugality, the patient industry, the habitual self-denial, enjoined by Christianity, are altogether vulgar virtues, mere every-day qualifications, which it may be respectable enough to possess, but which it is the part of high endowments to overlook or despise, as badges of natural servitude and conscious inferiority. [...] The idolaters of Dermody, Chatterton, Burns, and other poets of a similar cast of character, would almost persuade us that vice and genius are controvertible terms. (*QR* 21:41 [January 1819] 122)

While capable of reveling in the youthful exuberance of a poaching Shakespeare, Romantic culture could be censorious with its living authors, doubtful of their behavior and their literary merits. “Authorship” as a term, displayed certain pejorative valences. In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge refers to the “profession of literature, or, to speak more plainly, the trade of authorship” (127), explicitly troubling the class status of the authors by linking them to the “plain” practice of trade. In the *Edinburgh Review* “Authorship” veritably stinks of the shop:

The puny author is always redolent of authorship. He is a journeyman, who always smells of the shop, and who is always showing off his wares, and advertising his trash. These poor creatures can live only in authorship: lift them out of the medium in which they dabble, and they shrink up to nothing, like sea-blubbers taken out of the water. (*ER* 28:55 [March 1817] 85)

To be “redolent of authorship” is to openly advertise that one writes as a profession. It is a sure indication that one is among the groundlings rather than the true members of the literary world.

¹ Michael Gamer, *Romanticism, Self-Canonization, and the Business of Poetry*. Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2016.

These authors cannot be separated from their labor—bringing its stink into social settings, and even living in it as their native element.

It is on this stage that the Romantic periodical undertook its experimentation with authorship. It was a field in crisis—where authors had become personally interesting, but where the codes of decorum around the performance of authorship were crumbling into arrogance, self-involvement, and social climbing. The new regime of book reviewing that arrived with the *Edinburgh Review* began, then, as a conservative reaction. The *Edinburgh* policed authors who revealed too much about themselves, disclosed further information in retribution, and attacked those authors—especially women and men of the lower classes—who overstepped their bounds by becoming authors at all.

* * *

This seemingly straight-forward conservative reprisal against the new interest in authorial lives was complicated by fact that the periodical writers, themselves, emerged as a new authorial class in this period. Posed as antagonists and gatekeepers, the anonymous reviewers of the Romantic period were in a position to control the discourse around authors and authorship, while ostensibly insulated from any negative effects. Yet, periodical contributors were professional writers in their own right. The *Edinburgh Review* innovatively insisted on paying all its contributors at the same rate of 10*l* per sheet, instituting an economic standard that made periodical writing a meaningful income stream, and allowing book reviewers to become “professional *readers*” (Christie, 37). As Walter Scott explained in a letter to William Gifford, part of the startling success of the journal was due to “the very handsome recompense which the Editor not only holds forth to his regular assistants but actually forces upon those whose rank and fortune makes it a matter of indifference to them. [...] There are many young men of talent &

enterprize who are extremely glad of a handsome apology to work for fifteen or twenty guineas, upon whose gratuitous contributions no reliance could be placed & who nevertheless would not degrade themselves by being paid labourers in a work where others wrote for honour only” (1933, vol II, 102-3). Alongside book authorship, and often deeply enmeshed with it, periodical work came to provide a legitimate source of income.

The conditions of periodical writing, however, were different: publishing anonymously and later pseudonymously, periodical writers did not have the kind of connection between the published name and the private body that was of such interest to the readers of works like Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets*. Instead, periodical writers developed the ability to write in several different voices and often as several different personae. “Odoherty”, a fictitious contributor to *Blackwood’s Magazine* comically describes this diffusion of publications as a means of profiting from his different moods: “In point of fact, I write for this or that periodical, according to the state of my stomach or spirits, (which is the same thing,) when I sit down. Am I flat, I tip my Grandmother [the *British Review*] a bit of prose. Am I dunned into sourness – I cut up some deistical fellow for the Quarterly” (*BEM* 13 [March 1823] 82-3).² Inconsistency, a fault for which book authors might be attacked, became a virtue for the periodical writer. Experimentation with voice, persona, and personal details was valued a positive attribute in their work.

The antagonism between book authors and periodical writers is thrown into sharp relief by their relationship to copyright. In the wake of the *Donaldson v. Becket* verdict, publishers adapted their business models, creating—by 1800—a model of “mutual dependence” with their authors, in which “the publishers needed a constant stream of new books if they were to continue to make profits from works protected by the law” (Feather, 123). As Mark Rose has outlined, the

² The description of the *British Review* as “my Grandmother’s Review” is derived from Lord Byron, who mocked it as such in *Don Juan* as well as his “Letter to the Editor of ‘My Grandmother’s Review’”, originally published in the *Liberal*.

publisher's "vested interest" in creating an endlessly renewable stream of new intellectual properties left book authors like Wordsworth and Southey to relaunch the campaign for longer copyright terms on their own (111-2). For these living book authors, copyright represented an important legacy; Wordsworth, in an 1819 letter to J. Forbes Mitchell, inquired "why the laws should interfere to take away those pecuniary emoluments which are the natural Inheritance of the posterity of Authors" (qtd. Rose, 110). Book reviewers, meanwhile, balked at the stream of new books that this publishing model produced. Reviews, as the *Retrospective Review* described it, were constructed as "dykes or mud-banks" against a flood of print "as formidable to the ideas of men, as an inundation of water to their houses and cattle.... That the number of books has been increasing—is increasing—and ought to be diminished—is the deliberate resolution even of those who esteem themselves friendly to literature" ("Introduction", *RR* 1 [1820] i-ii). Lamenting the tedious amount of reading that reviewing entailed, the *Edinburgh Review* suggested that only "Quakers, Reviewers, and others, who make public profession of patience" would have the wherewithal to trudge through the swamps of the press (*ER* 21:42 [July 1813] 445).

Periodical writing meanwhile, did not benefit from the same copyright advantages as were bestowed on this deluge of books. Periodical writers were paid by the sheet, and had to accept their work being heavily rewritten by editors. In a letter to John Murray, Southey baulks at the alterations his reviews suffered:

I never complain of alteration in my articles, or remonstrate against them,—tho it is not possible that any man's writings can suffer more from mutilation, because no man takes such pains to render them coherent, & make the transitions natural: [the removal of] part of a paragraph destroys them,—& the parts which are then joined together look as a hand would do if it could be fixd to the elbow after the arm were [torn away].³

³ R. Southey to J. Murray II, 11 Feb 1815, Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland MS 42551.

Anonymous reviewing amounted to what Mark Schoenfield has called “corporate authorship”, productive of discomfort among those writers who did not want to be held responsible for what they had not written (4). Southey, again, furnished a complaint: “I have often wished some mark might be affixed to the different papers in the Review,—a single letter, for instance,—which might just serve the purpose of exempting Mr A from any imputation of holding the same opinion as Mr B, or the rest of the Alphabet, & this leaving every writer responsible to the public only for what he advances himself,” he explained to John Murray.⁴ The status of periodical writing was lower than that of books. In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge lamented the neglect of writing he had issued in periodicals like *The Friend*: “Are books the only channel through which the stream of intellectual usefulness can flow? Is the diffusion of truth to be estimated by publications; or publications by the truth which they diffuse or at least contain?” (124). Meanwhile, periodical writers who did reprint their own work—such as William Hazlitt with *Characters of Shakespear’s Plays* (1817) and *A View of the English Stage* (1818)—often drew fire for attempting to mislead readers with the false promise of new material. The *New Monthly Magazine* characterized the reprinter Hazlitt as a kleptomaniac, plagiarizing himself in order to offer the public “a mass of crudities already in their possession” (*NMM* 10:60 [January 1819] 487).⁵ The concept of copyright depended, Mark Rose argues, on “romantic and individualist assumptions” of originality (2); and periodical writers like Hunt or Hazlitt—in producing material that could only appear belatedly under their own copyright—found themselves in a vexed position in asserting the status of their work.

⁴ R. Southey to J. Murray II, 24 Aug 1816, Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland MS 42551.

⁵ “We have somewhere read of a man, in whom the furtive propensities were so deeply rooted, that he could not have existed a day, without exercising what Spurzheim genteelly denominates, “the faculty of acquiring at all events;” [stealing] and, when opportunities did not present themselves for the gratification of his favourite passion, he is said to have conveyed away his own property, that he might render himself, in idea, the purloiner of what did not belong to him. Mr. Hazlitt affords us a happy illustration of this anecdote.” (*NMM* 10, no. 60 (January 1819), 487).

The authorship that was practiced by periodical writers occurred in this space—outside of the copyright protection and self-canonizing work of living book-authors like Rousseau, Goethe, or Wordsworth—yet intimately connected with the economy of reputation under which all authors worked. Seemingly obvious, the idea of the author as *living* actually upset the conventional modes of criticizing (dead) authors, challenging codes of appropriate self-representation, and the idea of authorship itself. The 1820 founding of the *Retrospective Review* is emblematic of the problem: This magazine reviewed only dead authors, focusing on the literature of the early modern period in favor of that of the present day. In the introduction to its first volume, editor Henry Southern worries over the way “the alluring catalogue of attractive title-pages unfixes the attention, and causes the eye to wander over a large surface, when it ought to be intently turned upon a small though fertile spot” and advocates a return to “the old and venerable literature of the country, which has, as much as any thing, tended to make us what we are” (*RR* 1 [1820] iii-iv). In so doing, Southern simplified his own mission, solving the problem of the living author by denying its existence. But on a wider scale, Romantic periodicals embraced the challenges represented by the living author concept, employing it to test and reimagine the interest in authorial persons that arose in the late eighteenth century. Living authors are paradoxically complex—the fact of their continuing life threatens the decorum of talking about them, leading in the extreme case to libel, and yet their popularity, or even their own practices of self-promotion, demand some kind of discussion. The practice of book reviewing, with its cultural prominence, power, and connection to the unfolding experience of the literary sphere, provided a kind of ground zero for the discussion of this phenomenon.

“Living author” emerged as a specific term in the Romantic period, covering the paradoxical space between, on the one hand, the book authors who were trying to set up their own posthumous reception, and the periodical authors who were at times striving for that role

themselves, or working outside it in an anonymized system. Living authors point to the complex moment when writers have yet to become “great”, when literary value has yet to be determined, and when the mundane details of one’s living may be at stake. Living authors draw attention to an anxious temporality where even what has been completed and published does not really seem over, pending actions or writings yet to come. Through the confrontation of the living author, Romantic periodicals advanced a definition of authorship that embraces the quotidian, contradictory, and reiterative aspects of the periodical sphere. In so doing they formulated an idea of the author not as an exceptional being, but rather as a skilled performer of everyday personhood. The Romantic living author is not simply, in Foucault’s sense, a name that “serves as a means of classification [...] group[ing] together a number of texts and thus differentiat[ing] them from others” (Foucault, 1627), but an aspirational category: a skilled performer of selfhood rather than strictly literary achiever.

* * *

This project builds on the wealth of work on Romantic periodicals that has been published in over the past two decades. In extending our understanding of the Romantic periodical world, I am looking to make two main interventions. First, I would like to counteract a tendency to fragment the periodical sphere, subordinating it to the discussion of canonized names or genres considered better or more valuable. I will read these periodicals according to their own logic—what is primarily a book-reviewing logic—in order to trace the internal coherence of the form. Secondly, I am working to construct a longer periodization than has been usual in recent studies of Romantic periodicals—linking the early years of the *Edinburgh Review* developmentally with the post-*Blackwood’s* sphere of literary magazines.

The fragmentation around names and genres in the study of Romantic periodical has been a normal outgrowth of conceptualizations that were necessary to the construction of a viable subfield. That is to say that much of the emphasis on particular writers—Hazlitt, Lamb, De Quincey, Hunt, and the Blackwoodians—has been an important part of providing a gateway into the study of periodicals for those who were less familiar with the genre, or less intrigued by its chaotic fecundity. Mark Parker’s pioneering study, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism* (2000), argued persuasively for the literary value of the magazine, insisting on its place as “the preeminent literary form of the 1820s and 1830s in Britain” and its value in “fram[ing] a discussion of Romanticism” (1). While he stresses the common conventions of this magazine writing—underlining, for instance, how “many of the articles from one [the *London Magazine*] could easily have emerged in the other [*Blackwood’s*]”—he organizes his study around key “runs” of particular periodicals that highlight the importance of minor members of the greater Romantic canon such as William Hazlitt (21). Subsequent studies have tended to follow this pattern. David Minden Higgins, for instance, in *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine* (2005), redoubles the investment in canonical names, and subordinates the study of periodicals as such to the subgenres (“literary biography”, “magazine biography”) that they contain. Such an approach leads to the identification of “personality” attacks as a *problem* of literary biography: “a controversial form of criticism that [...] sought ‘to punish written egotism by a fierce obtrusion of the bodily into the written’, that is, through references to the appearances and the private lives [its] victims” (56). As I will argue more fully in my second chapter, reframing this controversial form of criticism within the logic of the book-reviewing periodical reveals it as a *solution* to a perceived problem in print culture.

As periodicals have gained critical attention and value, it has become increasingly possible to move beyond canonical names in their study. In *Romantic Magazines and*

Metropolitan Literary Culture (2011), David Steward reads across periodicals in his defense of an analogy between the “anxiety of definition” produced by increasing urbanization and that provoked by the burgeoning market for metropolitan miscellanies (7). Similarly, Mark Schoenfield, in *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity* (2009), reads across the *Edinburgh, Quarterly*, and *Blackwood’s* as he traces “the construction of the corporate identity of the journal that functioned as a template for individual identity” (6). But most influential for my own work have been the manner in which Richard Cronin (2010) and Kim Wheatley (2013) have represented the conjunction of hostility and intertextuality in the Romantic periodical market. In *Romantic Feuds*, Wheatley takes the feud itself as her object of analysis, tracing particular scandals as events through the different magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers that composed them. “I see the feuds as behaving like works of literature,” she explains, “ignited and kept alive by mixtures of political, commercial, psychological, and artistic motives, as well as by the exigencies of periodical form” (2). Introducing the feud as a genre, and scandals like the *Wat Tyler* controversy as particular “works” within that mode, Wheatley provides a means of reading across periodicals productively. In Cronin’s *Paper Pellets*, the duel serves a similar, although non-textual function, as a way of marking links between periodicals, acts of “cooperative antagonism” in which mutual recognition coincides with hostility (13).

In this dissertation I would like to continue our critical momentum away from individualizing particular periodicals and writers, to stress the commonalities, even the commonplaces, of Romantic periodical culture. For this reason, I will focus less on the exceptional profiles of particular writers and instead organize my argument around the steps in the elaboration of a central concept—the living author—as it emerges through such periodical practices as the synecdochic book reviewing, the attacks referred to as “personalities”, and the Cockney magazine persona.

My second intervention will be to argue across the boundaries under which Romantic periodicals are usually periodized. Romantic periodicals are usually understood and discussed through three distinct moments: (1) The 1790s, characterized by “a pattern of meeting critical episodes of unrest with occasional periodicals [...] heterogeneous in their content and imperfectly periodical in their appearance”, of which the *Anti-Jacobin* has been perhaps the most enduring example (Gilmartin, 101); (2) the reign of the great quarterlies in which the *Edinburgh Review* (1802) enjoyed such popularity that Walter Scott would observe that “no genteel family can pretend to be without it”, and its imitator, the *Quarterly Review* (1809), would aspire to the same status (Demata and Wu, 3); and (3) the period of “the heightening of the literary pretensions of the miscellaneous magazine” lead by the tumultuous *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, founded in 1817 (Wheatley 2003, 1). Almost all recent work on Romantic periodicals concentrates on the last of these periods. Cronin and Wheatley characterize this moment as a “post-Waterloo” period, “when the “sprightly” rhetoric of the two major quarterlies was hardening into what Coleridge called a “habit of malignity”” and the reign of the even-more-malign *Blackwood’s* began (Wheatley 2013, 3). Mark Parker, David Stewart, and David Minden Higgins all focus on this same moment, although without the specifically political periodizing language. Mark Schoenfield and William Christie, with his 2009 *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain*, are unusual in taking a longer view that incorporates the second and third periods.

This tendency to weight our discussion of Romantic periodicals primarily towards the period of *Blackwood’s Magazine* is problematic because of how it orphans the literary innovations of that periodical. *Blackwood’s* has certainly proved to be one of the most dramatic and most experimental periodical works of the Romantic period, with its reputation certainly not hindered by the dueling death of the *London’s* editor John Scott, “a casualty in the magazine war” with *Blackwood’s* (Cronin, 6). But our arguments have been hampered, this dissertation will

assert, by an assumption of Blackwoodian exceptionalism; and by periodizing my research to move from the founding of the *Edinburgh Review* through to the *Blackwood's* heyday, I aim to demonstrate the extent to which what is being called a “post-Waterloo” periodical culture is intimately connected with the book-reviewing culture from which it stems.

The political labelling of “post-Waterloo” is, of itself, somewhat of a red herring. Since Jon Klancher’s groundbreaking work on Romantic periodicals—which characterized them as engaged in a political project of “audience-making”—there has been a tendency to read Romantic periodical writing as being primarily politically motivated, and to take the exposure of underlying political motivations as the natural endpoint of their study (4). This method can be exemplified by the political lens through which Jeffrey Cox explains the *Blackwood's* attacks on the Cockney School of Poetry as “an attempt to isolate the Hunt circle as an other in terms of status, rank, and cultural literacy” (27)—an argument that effectively diagnoses the political motivations of the attack, without, I feel, exhausting the importance of its methods and effects. While critics like Demata and Wu now identify the reductive nature of such an approach—underlining how it would be “incorrect” to think of the Whig *Edinburgh Review* and the Tory *Quarterly Review* “as deadly rivals representing, without question, their respective party lines” (5)—the political remains a comfortable fallback for periodization in ways that demand further interrogation.

My study will, instead, look to transformations in print culture and publishing conventions to help map out the successive developmental moments. Thus, the 1802-1817 period in which the great quarterlies held sway is also the moment where book reviewing is dominant, and anonymous, corporate authorship is the norm. Post-*Blackwood's*, monthly publications surge, book-reviewing is sublimated into the literary essay, and persona and pseudonymity acquire greater importance. This shift in periodical design, form, and voice exert a far more real influence over the periodical’s meaning and effect than the resolution of the Napoleonic wars. Covering the

relatively long stretch between 1802-1830, my dissertation will track the development of the living author as concept from its discovery by the book-reviewing quarterlies and into the moment when literary magazine writers adopt the mantle of the living author for themselves, performing living author tropes and stereotypes in new and startling ways. The living author concept, its elaboration and evolution, provides a way to link these two periods, putting the selectivity and judgement of the *Edinburgh Review* into conversation with the raucous cast of *Blackwood's* in a more concrete and decisive way. In extending the periodization of my study, I am seeking to render a larger account of what insights periodical writing affords and how it reshapes our understanding of authorship. Tracking from conventions of the eighteenth century through the birth of a new, nineteenth-century periodical culture, this dissertation provides an account of how periodicals—both as reactions and innovations—reshape the understanding of authorship in the Romantic period and explore new possibilities for how the personal might figure in the private sphere.

* * *

Chapter one, “The Synecdoche and the Review”, examines how book reviewing was revolutionized in the Romantic period. I remedy a gap in our understanding by attending seriously to the form of book reviews after the 1802 founding of the *Edinburgh Review*. Devoting systematic attention to the techniques of excerpt, paraphrase, punctilious “verbal criticism”, and personal allusion, I taxonomize Romantic reviewing techniques, exploring their impact on authorship. I propose the synecdoche as a means of collectively describing the methods of book reviewing in this period. By taking parts of books—be they excerpts, grammatical, or even typographical, errors—as representations of the whole, periodical writers can efficiently respond to a surplus of books. Their broad adoption of synecdoche, and concurrent obsession with selection, are revealed as responses to a moment of perceived media excess. Working to digest,

compress, or otherwise rehabilitate the book, periodical writers position themselves as the true arbiters of knowledge in a culture prone to the excessive and the unnecessary.

My second chapter, “The Practice of Personality,” extends the problem of reviewing strategies into the most famous Romantic practice of “personalities”—or, judging books by revealing personal details about their authors. This most maligned feature of Romantic periodical culture is usually treated as an aberration, associated with the young Tories of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, who famously ordered the young apothecary John Keats to take his soporific poems “back to the shop”. This chapter probes the personal attack’s deeper place and meaning. Tracing them backwards from *Blackwood’s* “Cockney School” attacks back to the powerful *Edinburgh Review* and *Quarterly Review*, and understanding them as a book-reviewing technique, I argue that these personal attacks reimagine the problem of surplus books as a problem of surplus authors. Taking on a Malthusian mantle, book reviewers identify what I term the “authorship drive”: a human need to publish as pressing as the Malthusian drive to sexual reproduction. For the periodicals, this is a sign of a dangerous trend in which publication is seen as a normal part of the course of human life. The period’s famous personal attacks function, then, as a means of suppressing it.

In my third chapter, “Confronting the Living Author”, I engage with the periodical’s struggle to define the “living author”, identifying this concept as the troubling center of Romanticism’s engagement with an expanding print culture. Living authors—as encountered through book reviewing and other periodical writing—prove an unpredictable impediment to the process of criticism. Writing in real-time, periodical criticism of living authors is forced to confront the changeability and indeterminacy of an unfolding career. The period’s concerns with authors as apostates and neglected geniuses are inflections of this need to explain and theorize the living author. Uniting studies of the reception of Walter Scott and the Lake Poets with analysis of

the *London Magazine*'s "Living Authors" series and Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age*, I advance the "living author" as the conceptual problem that periodical writing makes visible and the periodical itself as a space for the negotiation of the living.

My final chapter, "Persona and the Performance of Living", analyses just what it is that periodical writers do with their living space. Resituating familiar works by Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey, and others in their original anonymous and pseudonymous context, this chapter argues that the personae developed in late-Romantic periodicals embrace the living author as a subject position and space of possibility. By developing personae, periodical writers endorse the living author as a model for the average person. Embracing the threat of universal authorship signaled by the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Review*, these periodical writers subvert the anxieties of personality culture, reimagining it as a practice of self-construction and identity performance, whose very conditionality confers utopian possibilities.

Chapter 1: The Synecdoche and the Review

October 1802: a revolution. The book review, that staid staple of the eighteenth-century magazine, resurfaced at the center of controversy as the *Edinburgh Review* began publication. Elevating the review above its dutiful drudgery, boasting a new, selective approach and an aggressive editorial line, the *Edinburgh Review* rewrote the generic boundaries of the book review. It was a watershed moment, in which the review became a genre worth seeking out not merely for information, but as a site of innovation and entertainment. As Walter Scott described the shift:

the common Reviews, before the appearance of the *Edinburgh*, had become extremely mawkish; and, unless when prompted by the malice of the bookseller or reviewer, gave a dawdling, maudlin sort of applause to everything that reached even mediocrity. The *Edinburgh* folks squeezed into their sauce plenty of acid, and were popular from novelty as well as from merit. (quoted in Roper 32)

This acid to which Scott alluded was made up of savage critiques and private revelations, delivered in highly memorable and quotable prose—an injection of flash and style in to what had been an unremarkable genre. In the place of the short, neutral reviews of the preceding century, the *Edinburgh* presented the book review as it had not been seen before—expansive, occasionally belated or off-topic, biting personal, and, above all, entertaining. In the lead article of its inaugural number, the *Edinburgh Review* laid out the periodical's two great innovations: the tart style referenced by Scott, and a new logic of selection. In this opening review, editor Francis Jeffrey did not merely evaluate Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer*, he also took the opportunity to both name and attack the 'Lake School' of poets, demonstrating the Review's new principles upon them.

The *Thalaba* review deals freely in the *Edinburgh Review*'s tart comedy, deploying it both to condemn its target poets and to establish the authority of its own voice. The review

advances the extended metaphor of Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge as belonging to a new “sect” of poets, whose main characteristic lies in being “*dissenters* from the established systems of poetry and criticism” (*ER* 1:1 [October 1802] 63). This parody of poetry as religion allows for the pejorative categorization of the Lake poets as dissenters, but it also portrays the poetic project more generally as being “more prolific, for a long time, of doctors than of saints” (*ER* 1:1 [October 1802] 63). The reviewer, as just such a doctor, challenges the would-be sainthood of Southey and company. Truly good poetry, like the saint’s religious miracle, belongs to the past. This tart metaphor is a fitting introduction to the new, literary language of the *Edinburgh Review*. The new reviewer is a “doctor of poetry”: a more modern figure than the poet and a more appropriate heir to literary prestige.

The *Edinburgh* reviewer is an influential cultural figure, not merely responsive to unfolding publications, but wielding a new power of selection, determining which books are worthy of notice. Not only does Jeffrey choose the subject of the *Thalaba* review, he selects the passages to be quoted, and decides how to group and name the ‘Lake’ poets. A policy of selectiveness necessitates that some case, whether implicit or explicit, must be made for the significance of the book under review. In the case of this exemplary review, Jeffrey claims that *Thalaba* is sufficient to represent a whole *school* of poets, rather than being an isolated example. These poets, Jeffrey explains, “constitute, at present, the mode formidable conspiracy that has latterly been formed against sound judgment in matters poetical; and are entitled to a larger share of our censorial notice, than could be spared for an individual delinquent” (*ER* 1:1 [October 1802] 64). The seemingly neutral move of selection is still a form of representation: Wordsworth and Coleridge would later deny the existence of the school and resent the way that reviews in this vein treated their works as essentially interchangeable. The act of selection of authors, books, or passages allows the reviewer a new power of arrangement. In this model of book reviewing, both

tart tone and selection empower the reviewing persona. They are the inflection points around which the traditional duties of the book reviewer are transformed in the post-*Edinburgh* periodical world.

What I am calling the duties of the book reviewer descend from the preceding century and consist mainly in mediation and evaluation—that is to say the transmission of the book’s contents and the judgement of its merits. The *Edinburgh Review* does not represent the beginning of book reviewing, but rather a transformation of the already-established reviewing system, and a move away from one that historians and critics have since found to be more fair, if less sensational. Derek Roper, for instance, concludes that it was in the period before the founding of the *Edinburgh Review* that periodicals experienced “the height of their power and prestige” (Roper, 21), while Antonia Forster points to the eighteenth century as the place where the “business of criticism and its place in the history of the book was established” (631). For Romanticist Marilyn Butler, too, “nothing done by journalists *within* nineteenth century culture could quite match the significance of their creation of that culture a century earlier” (126). For Butler, the failure of the nineteenth century reviews is exemplified in the fact that the two main quarterly reviews never “played much part in spotting new talent” (138). For Butler, Roper, and Forster, then, the new regime of book reviewing that arose in the wake of the *Edinburgh* was a debased form of the eighteenth-century model. In this chapter, I will be showing that what these critics have seen as a decline in the book review’s proper purpose and form in the second half of the Romantic period, is actually a reinterpretation of those goals under a new, more playful methodology. In measuring early nineteenth-century efforts against the eighteenth-century conventions, Roper, Forster, and Butler have not explored effects of the new tone and selectivity in rendering book-reviewers more efficient, and more powerful.

Book reviewing in the eighteenth century set out to condense the content of newly-published books in order to inform readers. As Michael Gamer has recounted, the *Monthly Review*, founded in 1749, was in its own way groundbreaking, offering to survey all newly published works and furnish “an account [...] which should, in virtue of its candour, and justness of distinction, obtain authority enough [...] to be serviceable to such a would choose to have some idea of a book before they lay out their money or time on it” (qtd. Gamer 2015, 534). In offering not only disinterested coverage but comprehensivity, the *Monthly* “established codes of reviewing that remained dominant through the end of the century” (534). The pages of this pre-1802 review can be conceived as reprint space: the combination of abstract and excerpt that make up this style of review “pre-empt[s] any necessity of reading the books themselves” (Forster, 632). This can be seen most plainly in the abstract-reviews that Forster discusses, but it also describes the longer reviews that Roper vindicates in *Reviewing before the Edinburgh*. In broad strokes, the eighteenth-century book review is recognizable for its even tone, its faithful representation of a book’s contents, and occasionally its critical engagement with the text at hand. The book reviewer—self-effacing and neutral—produces a faithful encapsulation of the text on which he reports. The standard eighteenth-century book review, as exemplified by periodicals like the *Analytical Review*, the *Critical Review*, or *Annals of Literature*, or even the more explicitly politically motivated *British Critic*, prioritized the accurate transmission of the book’s contents, as Roper explains:

It is also true that more space was usually given to the display of the book’s content than to the investigation of its relative worth. From the abstract-journals, the Reviews inherited the practice of summarizing the work under review and of giving substantial extracts. To this was added a proportion of criticism that varied considerably from one article to another. (41)

The reviewer’s criticism, Roper stresses, may have been inflected by the periodical’s political perspective, but not in a way that compromised the journal, since: “by the end of 1791 these

[political] positions were generally known and could be allowed for by readers” (36). Informed eighteenth-century readers could consume these reviews, confident in their own ability to make judgements based on their contents.

Roper’s analysis calls attention to a hierarchy of functions within book reviewing: the eighteenth-century review, like the abstract-journal before it, prioritized the replication of the book’s contents above its evaluation. The series of excerpts commonly found between the covers of each issue not only constituted a miniaturized version of each book’s story or argument, but also presented sufficient evidence for reader to judge whether to purchase or borrow the book. Its fundamental structure, therefore, prioritized this process of representation. Reviews represented themselves as chronicles of cultural progress, emphasizing the cumulative value of their unfolding representational project instead of the importance of their particular judgements and opinions of any given work (Gamer 2006, 68).

The *Edinburgh Review* and its imitators inverted this hierarchy: judgement and evaluation came to replace neutral representation as the reviewer’s chief responsibility. The new model of selectivity implied that most works were unworthy of serious attention. Under this new, judgement-centric approach, the reviewer’s persona acquired greater importance and became more finely delineated. Despite the anonymity of reviewers in the *Edinburgh* and its imitators—periodicals presented a united front under the editorial ‘we’—the agency of reviewers and editors in discussing a particular book became more evident. It is in this vein that the *Quarterly Review* offers an apology for “noticing” Haafner’s *Travels in India*: the reviewer’s accusation that Haafner is a French spy serves as a justification for publicizing (or otherwise drawing *notice* to) such a seditious publication (*QR* 7:13 [March 1812] 136). Rather than the self-effacing neutrality or the predictable and discountable political slant identified by Roper, the post-*Edinburgh* reviewer was notable for personal interest, capriciousness, and political rancor. This reviewer is

responsible for the choices that result in the review, often attacked or blamed for how the new power of selection is exercised.

Eighteenth-century reviews valorized the representation of a book's contents, miniaturizing it through summary or providing selected excerpts to demonstrate the key points of its style. The book reviews of the Romantic period, too, sought to mediate the book. But the *Edinburgh* expanded the sense of what forms of mediation any one book might receive. In what I will term as a synecdochic move, the *Edinburgh* represented and evaluated books through a selected part. Rather than the condensing logic of the summary, the synecdochic logic of the post-*Edinburgh* review suggests that a book does not need to be represented by a complete and faithful anatomy, but rather, by the evaluation of a symbolic element. The book reviewer, by virtue of creating such synecdoches, rivals the book's author in authority, generating superior representations of the book's contents and significance.

I: The Synecdochic Review

Book reviewers employed synecdoche to review books more efficiently and persuasively without resorting to the exhaustive representation of their contents. Rather than invoking what Leah Price terms an "organicist theory" of the book's construction (144), reviewers are empowered to construct a representation in which a selected symbolic element can encapsulate the book. As in a literary synecdoche, in which the poet makes use of a part to represent a whole, book reviewers employ a similarly poetic move, using a part of the book—such as a passage, its author, or its typeface—to represent it in their reviews. Synecdoche thus had two functions for the reviewer: it provided an efficient and elegant means by which to represent and evaluate the text under review, and it elevated the reviewer's art—representing their power of selection as akin to poetic composition.

This use of synecdoche was not *sui generis* but evolved from earlier uses of the figure in eighteenth-century political cartoons. As Shearer West has argued, Hogarth's representation of John Wilkes as a squinter was just such a substitutive move: "Wilkes's squint is raised from a feature of the private man to a synecdoche for his public role and all the abstract virtues that accompanied it" (74). Annette Cafarelli detects this literary device in later Romantic biographies: "anecdotal biography allowed symbolic patterning to totally supersede thoroughness and chronological fidelity. A few synecdochic episodes represent the whole of the character and life of the subject" (17). What Cafarelli diagnoses as a particularly biographical technique in the 1820s is connected to both Hogarth's political cartoons and the move called "personality" in Romantic book reviewing. In each case, the synecdoche provides the means of elevating a detail and imbuing it with explanatory meaning. By expanding on the earlier use of synecdoche in print culture, book reviewers elevated the profile and importance of acts of selection. Synecdochic representation empowered reviewers and editors as creative agents in their own right, demoting the books they read to mere materials

From the moment of its prospectus, the *Edinburgh Review* associated its project with the principle of selection: "It will be easily perceived, that it forms no part of their object, to take notice of every production that issues from the Press; and that they wish their Journal to be distinguished, rather for the selection, than for the number, of its articles". Selection is *the* distinguishing feature of the project, separating it from the plodding work of the eighteenth-century reviews. According to the *Edinburgh*, this selection model depended on merit and prominence rather than representativity. As the prospectus explains, they "decline any attempt at exhibiting a complete view of modern literature; and to confine their notice, in a great degree, to works that either have attained, or deserve, a certain portion of celebrity". This model of book selection changes the expectations of the review's representative act in important ways. First, by

splitting the selection criteria between merit and popularity—without systematically revisiting these—the *Edinburgh* allowed for a certain degree of indeterminacy among its seemingly laboriously-chosen books: which principle each article is meant to fulfill seems at times strategically unclear. Secondly, because it depended on attributes like popularity, that can have a delayed emergence, the *Edinburgh Review* was freed from the kind of currency that had originally set reviews like the *Monthly* apart. The selection of Southey's *Thalaba* as inaugural review is emblematic: it provided the opportunity for a belated treatment of the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, with the reviewer appealing to the idea of the poetic “school” to explain the choice. Compounded by its initiation of a slower, quarterly publication schedule, the *Edinburgh*'s principle of selection actively ruptured expectations currency that are usually tied to the periodical, especially a responsive periodical like the book review.⁶

The principle of selection was central not just to the editor's choice of books to review, but also to the process of book reviewing itself. By reprinting parts of a book, or remediating its contents, the reviewer selected what was worthy of the reader's attention. For the *Edinburgh* this was the most useful service that a reviewer could offer to the public. Thomas Clarkson's *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, for instance, is deemed “a book peculiarly fitted for reviewing: for it contains many things which most people will have some curiosity to hear about; and is at the same time so intolerably dull and tedious, that no voluntary reader could possibly get through with it” (*ER* 10:19 [April 1807] 85). The badly-written or diffuse book is selected for remediation

⁶ Both the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly Review* have been criticized for their tendency toward books reviews that seem to merely provide a launching point for an essay by the reviewer, what Derek Roper has termed “reviews in name only” (41). Such a prioritization of the topic over the book might be seen as a natural extension of the synecdochic approach undertaken by the review—in a sense, placing a component of the book (its topic) over the unitary integrity of the text, or even the author's position on that topic. In this sense, the new mode of book-reviewing instituted by the *Edinburgh Review* is somewhat anti-bibliographic. Reviewers produce not a faithful view of the bibliographic world as one in which books are subordinate to the existential topics that they take on. The book-reviewer devotes much of his time to denying, curtailing, and replacing books.

and through the reviewer's labor a new, more efficient version of the text is created—one that is more useful to the reader, and more respectful of his or her time. The process of excerpt and summary that is enacted on Clarkson's book represents the primary mode through which reviewers use selection to accomplish their work.

The selection and reprinting of passages allowed book reviewers to construct divergent models of a book's contents. The reviewing of Thomas De Quincey's 1822 *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, for example, reveals the breadth of possibilities that this reviewing style affords. For readers who did not subscribe to the *London Magazine*, plan to buy the book, or otherwise lacked the time or inclination to read it, the reviewer's selection of excerpts and summary provided a kind of substitute. For example, the *Imperial Magazine*, a 1s monthly targeted at a working-class audience enacts a kind of disinfection of De Quincey's narrative of addiction, carefully selecting excerpts in order to produce a radically different text. The editor's preface to the bound volume for 1823 makes the mission of the *Imperial Magazine* clear:

By noticing facts that daily occur, we perceive the pernicious effects which are produced by immoral publications, *even though partially counteracted by those of an opposite tendency*. [...] And if [...] the direction of the press should fall into the hands of men devoted to the cause of licentiousness, another Sodom might be expected to appear, provoking by its crimes the vengeance of the Almighty, and exhibiting to posterity a spectacle, like the cities of the plain, in records of fire and brimstone, and another asphaltic lake. (*IM* 1 [1823] [ii], my italics)

According to the editor's apocalyptic vision, immoral publications are dangerous even when refuted. It is then no surprise that he will commission a review which reforms the entire text of the *Confessions* rather than merely debunking it. Priced at 1s, the *Imperial Magazine*, reached an audience that was unlikely to ever read the original version of the *Confessions* and therefore there was no risk in repackaging and approving of it.

Judging that it is better to transform the work than to fight it, the reviewer inscribes a story of social fall and redemption onto De Quincey's narrative of an unhappy childhood

followed by opium addiction, making the Opium-Eater into the protagonist of a moral fable, rather than a real autobiographical subject. Thus, the reviewer collects a series of passages that support this moral arc. The first quotation selected from the *Confessions* relates the author's childhood learning in Greek and his intellectual superiority to his school-masters, as well as his social superiority to his classmates: "my other two classmates were poor [...] but I [...] had a small patrimonial property, the income of which was sufficient to support me at college" (*IM* 5 [1823] 90). From this position of social superiority, the Opium-Eater makes the "short-sighted" decision to run away from school to London. The reviewer quotes at length the Opium-Eater's scene of contemplation in his bedroom just before his departure from school, which has been made financially possible by "a lady of rank [...] having made him a present of ten guineas" (*IM* 5 [1823] 90). Before his departure, the Opium-Eater kisses a portrait of a lady (name obscured with a dash) which is hung in his bedroom. In the *Imperial Magazine's* shrunken version, this kiss farewell is framed as a kiss farewell to his social status.

The reviewer declines to provide a detailed summary of the time between the Opium-Eater's leaving school and his introduction to opium while a student at Oxford. Thus, he summarizes as quickly as possible those more morally upsetting episodes of De Quincey's poverty and homelessness in London:

His portrait of the unfortunate but high-minded Ann * * *, to whom he was indebted for the preservation of his life... is most forcibly and touchingly drawn; but it holds out a dangerous precedent, and it is of a character with the imprudent social conduct which necessarily led to such an association. (*IM* 5 [1823] 92)

The reviewer, in keeping with the line of the magazine, condemns the morality of the Opium-Eater's association with the prostitute Ann and notes it as a "dangerous precedent". This association is caused by the Opium-Eater's previous "imprudent social conduct"—which, in this truncated version, can be none other than his leaving school and his social situation in order to go

to London. This review is unique in stressing that Ann's surname has been obscured. In the text of the *Confessions*, the erasure of Ann's surname appears only once, with a dash indicating the deletion. The use of the asterisks draws even more attention to the name, which, unlike the lady of rank's, is not withheld out of respect. The shame associated with Ann's status as an "unfortunate" is acted out on her surname, which is made even more conspicuously absent. Its absence reminds readers that the Opium-Eater *did* know it, and should have had an easier time finding Ann upon his return to London, were it not for the fact that she moves in a level of society where last names do not count.

This review includes only two more quotations: De Quincey's displeasure at the dearth of accurate medical knowledge about opium, which is accompanied by skeptical comments; and the final paragraphs of the *Confessions*, in which De Quincey describes the continued physical sufferings that he feels as a consequence of having been a heavy user of opium and closes with a quotation from Milton. With this final quotation from Milton, De Quincey cautiously re-inscribes himself into literary society, and, by including it without challenge, the reviewer suggests that it is acceptable in a way that his statements about medicine were not. De Quincey is readmitted to society as a literary, although not medical authority. By affirming that the text is informative and full of "literary exuberance" while declining to quote any examples of such from the opium visions, the reviewer makes De Quincey's transgressive behavior acceptable as a cautionary tale:

The matter composing this narrative, originally appeared in the pages of a popular magazine; and much speculation was employed at the time in endeavouring to separate such parts as might be taken for fact, from those which were merely the excursive embellishments of a richly-stored imagination. It is, however, our firm conviction, that amidst an almost overpowering accumulation of literary exuberance, the terrific truths of the narrative stand nakedly conspicuous; that it is really given to the public as an accurate picture of the mental misery attending the use of opium; and that it will prove "not merely an interesting record, but, in considerable degree, useful and instructive." (*IM* 5 [1823] 94-5)

De Quincey's opening address to the reader is reinserted at the end of the review. It offers up the text as an instructive one and privileges that function over any concern for morality or propriety. As an exemplary tale about the sufferings attendant a violation of one's social position, the narrative is useful regardless of its relationship to truth. The reviewer approves it as an "accurate picture of the mental misery attending the use of opium", which is more important than the verifiability of individual details—or even the reviewer's fidelity to them.

The version of the Opium-Eater that is offered by the *Imperial Magazine* to its poorer audience stresses the value of social stability. It omits most of the book's contents, especially the dazzling literary excess of the "pleasures of opium" or the terrifying dream visions of the "pains". It stresses instead the consequences of moving below one's social station and fraternization with inappropriate people and substances. It guarantees a life of mental and bodily suffering which, even when those acquaintances are relinquished, haunts the transgressor. This review mobilizes the goals of didactic literature to dispel concerns about the truth and morality of the narrative. The text is disinfected by turning it into a moral tale of fall-and-redemption in which the transgressor must pay for his suffering. Through this narrative, the reviewer distances the text from concern with De Quincey's effusive visions or his transgressive body.

De Quincey's book provides a valuable example for this investigation because it crosses generic conventions. Its mixed genre of literary autobiography and scientific document forces reviewers to choose which codes to review it under. In the *Imperial Magazine*, the reviewer chooses to render De Quincey's book as a didactic tale, rather than debunk it as science. By selecting passages that emphasize the moral and social aspects of the book, the reviewer constructs a more generically consistent version of the text for circulation among readers who are unlikely to read the original. Through such generically-loaded phrases as the "short-sighted decision" and "imprudent friendship", the reviewer achieves a classification of the text that

allows it to be understood *without* reading. Rather than treating genre as something that exists a priori in the text, reviews like this show us how the attribution (and indeed, the construction) of genre is made through the review. Genre itself, we might argue, is another mode of synecdochic reading that these reviews practice.

Such a project of remediation through review may appear either misleading, objectionable, or simply obvious, but it depends on a project that values the reviewer's selection and judgement and does not demand an accurate accounting of the entire text. Elsewhere, reviewers are prone to flaunt the lack of systematization of their selections, refusing to marshal any arguments about their representativity. While the chosen passages replace the full text for readers of the review, reviewers rely on the revelatory power of even random selections. As Francis Jeffrey claimed in *Edinburgh Review* of Southey's *Thalaba*: selections were made "almost at random" (*ER* 1:1 [October 1802] 69), thus ostensibly freeing him from accusations of personal ill will. A January 1806 review of Mercer's *Poems* similarly contains passages "selected as random, [so that] the reader may be enabled to form a very fair estimate of the style and peculiar merits of the poems contained" (*ER* 7:14 [January 1806] 478). By declaiming their own process of selection, reviewers seek to deflect attention from problems of distortion, or to suggest, that at the limit, there is no excerpt that would not be an appropriate synecdoche of the whole.

As the selection model increases the reviewer's power, even the act of excerpting comes to be represented as a kind of patronage. Thus in a review of Walter Scott's *Waverley*, the reviewer for the *Monthly Review* excuses the unequal distribution of his favours: "In devoting so much space to the chief of the Mac-Ivors, we might demand an equal indulgence in favour of his sister [...] but here again we are most unwillingly obliged to restrain our pen, by a necessary regard to the extent of this article" (*MR* 75 [November 1814] 287). Limitations on article length force an unwilling restraint on this reviewer, preventing him from treating the female character at

the same length as her brother. The act of excerpting the character description is imagined as an indulgence to a fictional character on the part of the reviewer, who publishes his or her merits in so doing. By adopting the figure of the patron, the reviewer sets up a dynamic in which excerpt space (rather than merely coverage space) gets spent like patronage money, the reviewer magnanimously giving over his own space to promote another.⁷

Synecdochic representation through selected passages resulted in the deconstruction of the text under review. Its plot, genre, or arguments were disassembled by the reviewers and often recombined in ways that authors perceived as unfair or even hostile. Yet the reviews themselves overflowed with protestations of helpfulness. Like the remediation of Clarkson above, the reviewers represented themselves as abridging readerly labor and helping authors to reach a larger audience. In the *Quarterly Review*, for example, we encounter the value of synecdochic reviewing argued through a contrast between two possible reviewing styles—the “analytic” and the “synthetic”:

There are two ways of reviewing M. de Humboldt’s book; the analytical, which, by excluding the superfluous matter, would lay bare a skeleton composed of but scanty and meagre materials, as far as the present volumes are concerned; and the synthetical, if we may be allowed that term to express the collecting together his general views and opinions, and, according to his own taste, ‘exhibiting them in groups, and not separately, as they were successively observed.’ We prefer the latter, as being less dry, and possessing moreover the advantage of displaying the author’s *manner* of treating a subject as well as the *matter* of it; and we are certain of its being the one most agreeable to himself. (*QR* 14:28 [January 1816] 369-70).

⁷ The reviewer-as-patron should be contrasted with the more pernicious spread of patronage in unauthorized circuits. The *Edinburgh* complained in 1811 that “Poetry is read now, we suppose, by very nearly ten times as many persons; and fifty times as many think themselves judges of poetry; and are eager for an opportunity to glorify themselves as its patrons, by exaggerating the merit of some obscure or dubious writer, in whose reputation they may be entitled to share, by contributing to raise it. thus, in our time, we have had Mrs H. More patronizing Mrs Yearsley the milkwoman; and Mr Capel Loft bringing forward Mr Bloomfield the shoemaker; and Mr Raymond Grant challenging immortality for Mr Dermody the drunkard; and Sir James Bland Burgess and Sir Brooke Boothby, and Miss Aikin and Miss Holford, and fifty others, patronizing themselves, and each other, with the most laudable zeal and exemplarity activity” (*ER* 17:34 [January 1811] 430). In place of this self-promoting patron, the reviewer’s patronage appears less personal, more disinterested.

Here, the “analytical” mode, outlined first, indicates the sort of faithful summary of contents for which Roper applauded the eighteenth century reviews.⁸ The synthetical mode, however, proves to be the dominant and most appealing one. The reviewer defends it here as one that the author would prefer—rather than reducing the book to skeleton (structure), the reviewer reads for its manner (style) and matter (content). Unlike the analytical mode’s focus on summary and condensation, the desire to reproduce style helps to justify the practice of extensive quotation on which the labor of book-reviewing relies at this time.⁹ But it has greater ramifications: by stressing that books are—or that authors would appreciate them being treated as—texts that are more important for their style or content than their construction, the reviewer de-emphasizes the integrity of the book as organic whole. The reviewer justifies the mode of synecdoche: the well-chosen part of the book is more important than a full summary. Because the book is no longer prioritized as a unit by the reviewing process, a new mobility is introduced. Under the “synthetical” rather than the “analytical” method, a new act of synthesis can take place: the creation of new versions of the text through selective excerpting, as seen with the *Imperial Magazine*’s revision of De Quincey.

⁸ It should be noted that the *Quarterly Review* still considered the analytic method a legitimate approach. It was the mode most often adopted when the review dealt with authors with which it was socially or economically connected—that is to say, that authors who also wrote for the review or were published by the periodical’s publisher John Murray were handled in a delicate analytical manner in order to avoid the charge of “puffing”. Lord Byron, William Gifford, Robert Southey and Walter Scott all receive summary-heavy reviews, allowing the *Quarterly* to sidestep making detailed pronouncements on their merits—See for example the review of *Waverley* in *QR* 11:22 [July 1814], of Gifford’s *Life of the Rt. Honourable W. Pitt* in *QR* 4:7 [August 1810], and of Southey’s *Life of Wesley* in *QR* 24:48 [October 1820]. The perceived neutrality and fairness of the analytical mode is especially useful in sanitizing Byron, excising his problematically obscene or libelous comments under the handy category of “superfluity”. Consider for instance the treatment of *Lara*, which is approached mainly through plot summary, with the following introduction: “We now proceed to the poem of *Lara*, which we hope to compress within a very moderate compass, because the incidents that it contains are not numerous, and because the delineations of character with which it abounds, being drawn from persons with whom the reader is already acquainted, may, without inconvenience, be omitted. [...] every eye was turned on the mysterious *Lara*, and on his equally mysterious page *Kaled*—in whom our readers will, of course, have recognized their old friends *Conrad* and *Gulnare* [from the *Corsair*, previously summarized in the same review]” (*QR* 11:22. [July 1814] 443-4)

⁹ That is to say, that since they were paid by the sheet, book reviewers could expedite their work with extensive quotations.

The post-*Edinburgh* reviewing culture, dependent on excerpting to produce synecdoche, builds on principles identified in the eighteenth-century practice of anthologizing by Leah Price. The *Imperial Magazine* treatment of De Quincey, for instance, could be considered an example of bowdlerization, in which, according to an “atomistic logic”, the reviewer can locate “moral value in parts rather than the whole” (82). Both reviews and anthologies allowed texts to be renamed and recirculated under the aegis of new values. But reviews are also more than anthologies in crucial ways: in their synecdochic practice they moved beyond the anthology’s definition of what constituted part of the text. Rather than limiting themselves to passages, they considered typography, grammar, and authorial identity as relevant and interpretable elements of the book. Against the textual logic of the anthology, which accommodated “historical and stylistic discontinuities” but folded them into a common structure and format (64), the review explodes synecdoche to allow a variety of accidental and paratextual aspects to serve as legitimate representations of the book. These stretches of synecdoche, and the ridicule and play that they occasion, provide the “acid” that Walter Scott found so crucial to the journal’s success.

II: The *Edinburgh*’s acid and synecdochic play

By playing with the limits of synecdoche, by pushing it beyond the accepted rules of the anthology-piece, the post-*Edinburgh* review produced the period’s most famous and controversial critical interventions. From the *Edinburgh Review* to *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, book-reviewing periodicals explore the limits of synecdoche, producing evaluations of varying degrees of sincerity. It is this playful slippage of synecdoche that gives rise to reviewing conventions such as verbal and typographical criticism, and even personal attacks, called “personalities”. In this section, I will trace how these synecdoches employ various accidental and paratextual parts of the book as representations of its contents or arguments. I will argue that this process reveals the reviewer’s new mission: policing the bounds of authorship, a classificatory project that will

determine which books are really the product of authors, and which are the work of aspirants who should be dissuaded from any further attempt.

A first extension or deformation of synecdoche is found in “verbal criticism”, a practice that predates the *Edinburgh* and bears similarities to what we might think of as line-editing. Verbal criticism usually consisted in correcting grammar or terminology. In its more benign form, it served to enforce proper diction within specialized fields. It is in this sense that the *Monthly Review* employs it in a review of an essay on music:

Though Mr. Kollman is a perfect master of his subject, yet, being less acquainted with the musical language of this country than with that of Germany, he has been guilty of a few misnomers.... Mistakes of this kind, however, as they lead to no error of doctrine, are very excusable; and we shall not enter farther into verbal criticism, on a work so replete with real knowledge. (*MR* 31 [February 1800] 131)

Here, the reviewer here gently flags a translingual source of confusion within the context of an overall positive review. But the practice of verbal criticism existed in a more virulent form that anticipated the synecdochic reviewing model of the *Edinburgh*. In some hands, “verbal criticism” becomes an opportunity; grammatical error serves to justify the wholesale dismissal of a book. While panning Mary Robinson’s *Walsingham*, for instance, the *Anti-Jacobin* objects to Robinson’s misunderstanding of literary description: “We should recommend to her the perusal of Blair’s Lectures, or some such book of plain precepts of rhetoric, as, if attentively studied, they might teach her to suit her language to the subject, and to employ figures without mixing and confusing them. Her metaphors are indeed so frequently jumbled together, that it is difficult to conceive what ideas she means to convey” (*AJR* [August 1798] 163). The reviewer interprets Robinson’s mixed metaphors as not merely a misunderstanding of the English language, but of English values, too—a telling blow in the light of the *Anti-Jacobin*’s real concern with her *French* sympathies. Her misuse of her native language is in and of itself an indication of her principles and grounds for avoiding her fiction. Through “verbal criticism”, correct grammar and usage

comes to represent the author's values, permitting the reviewer to dismiss her without recapitulating—and thus circulating—her political points.¹⁰

Not only grammatical but bibliographic codes served as a means of evaluation. Book reviewers invoked conventions of typography, spelling, pagination, and binding in order to evaluate the books that came under their scrutiny. Rather than selecting excerpts, reviewers could be found selecting these even smaller elements as representations of a book's value. Mention of the size and binding of a book, for instance, could provide an occasion to literally judge a book by its cover—as in the *Quarterly*'s review of Colman's *Poetical Vagaries*, of which it is observed: "Perhaps, however, the very shape and size of his work is a parody, and he means it as a ridicule on the quarto mania of the present tiers-état race of poets. If this was his intention, we can only say, that never was a burlesque more complete; but, we are obliged to add, that, for a practical joke, it is rather expensive" (*QR* 8:15 [September 1812] 145). Here, the reviewer highlights the book's expensive quarto form as a bathetic comment on its contents. Without need to discuss them at length, the reviewer efficiently represents it as a parody and a joke. Rather than judging the content of the particular book, it delivers a judgement that it is not a proper book at all—in a sense, it fails the test of bibliographic decorum: its scale does not match its worth. Publication form transcends, and even impeaches, content.

A more sustained instance of this type of reviewing can be found in the *Edinburgh Review*'s treatment of Joseph Ritson's *Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food, as a Moral Duty*.

¹⁰ Verbal criticism is also found in the reviews of books that the periodical expects its readers to actually read. Justifying the sustained attention to grammar in a review of Jameson's *System of Mineralogy*, the *Edinburgh Reviewer* insists on the necessity of verbal criticism of books that will be read by the most impressionable readers: "those elementary books which are placed in the hands of the young and ignorant should not present them with examples of a mode of composition vitiated to the greatest degree. They should not have every possible defect in grammar, in the selection and application of words, and in spelling, presented to them in print, in a work affirmed in its own preface to be the standard of authority on the subject of which it treats." (*ER* 5:9 [October 1804] 68)

In dismissing this book, the reviewer focusses on the essential contradiction between Ritson's moral precepts and the processes of book production in the period:

His whole life, as an author, is at a variance with those principles which torment and starve his life as a man. His harangues against destroying animal life, are ushered into the world on the spoils of the slain; and the taking up of his pen to deprecate the violations of life, is a signal for the fate of thousands. Would it be more ridiculous in a righteous confectioner to preach up the abolition of the slave trade, by uttering invectives against the use of sugar in tea, and practice his doctrines by conscientiously poisoning himself with sour punch, while he dealt out to the world every other species of saccharine preparation? (*ER* 1:1 [October 1802] 132)

The use of animal products in the production of books guarantees that Ritson's vegetarian propaganda circulates at the expense of the very lives he wants to save. The material form of Ritson's book—its leather binding, and animal-derived glue, ink, and paper coating—contravenes his message. The “spoils of the slain” make up the literal material on which his argument circulates. His defense of vegetarianism cannot be printed without producing a logical contradiction between content and material form. The reviewer insists that the identity of publishing author is irreconcilable with the vegetarian ethos that Ritson espouses: he may “starve” on his vegetable diet, but to be an author is to publish and to publish is to cost the lives of “thousands” in book materials. By using the material book as evidence, the reviewer produces a contradiction between Ritson's values and his practices as an author. His book becomes a sort of misidentified thing: not a book-commodity produced by an author but a morally confused object. As the analogy of the confectioner suggests—there are certain professions that preclude certain moral stances. The author can no more abstain from the use of animal products than the confectioner can abstain from using sugar. Despite the fact that the *Edinburgh* supports the end of the slave trade, this analogy does not produce a move to revise book production—rather, the suggestion is that people who object to the conventions of certain industries remove themselves from it. By advocating abstention rather than reform, the reviewer effectively silences Ritson.

As with verbal criticism, bibliographic features serve as a means of denying authority from an author. In so doing, the technique makes the review itself unnecessary, and the book itself undeserving of the more considerate handling of the eighteenth-century style review. Even details for which the author may not be responsible can be used to dismiss his or her work. The Ritson review demonstrates this very move when the reviewer assesses the book's problematic typography:

Before taking leave of this most nauseous performance, and of its wretched author, we trust for ever, a few words remain to be added upon the *style*, in which all the strange absurdities and filthy abominations of his perverted brain are delivered. We do not mean to go farther than the external qualities—the matchless ludicrousness of the orthography and typography. The following words may convey a notion of the strange garb in which this book appears: *Writeërs* (writers); *wel* (well); *kil* (kill); *onely* (only); *probablyly* (probably); *perhap* (perhaps); *bodys* (bodies). But it is not only the structure and spelling of words, that this puny and pitiful innovator extends his love of change. By a strange species of egotism, the first personal pronoun is always printed i. When two l's occur, they are not printed as usual ls, but sl; and a double f is uniformly printed separately f f. [...] Our readers will perceive how exactly this inconsistency and folly, in the external appearance, is parallel to that which distinguishes the substance of the present work. (*ER* 1:1 [October 1802] 135-6)

Here, typography is read as a representation of the author's mind. The reviewer begins by attacking Ritson's new theory of spelling, which mainly depends on the reduction of redundant consonants; but these changes are not represented as the system they are. Instead, the changes are "ludicrous", lumped in with other irregularities, "inconsistency and folly" such as the substitution of "sl" for "ls". While the reviewer paints this as Ritson's folly, the inversion of the letters is a compositor's error, while the objectionable "f f" in place of "ff" signals not the author's illiteracy, but the printer's lack of special piece of type, called a ligature, that includes both fs together. This attack depends on the reviewer's assumption of a willful ignorance about book production: the author is made responsible for all these changes and a potential critique of cheap and sloppy printing becomes an attack on the mental cogency of the author of the manuscript. By conflating Ritson's own decisions with what may have been his compositor's or printer's failings, the

reviewer denies the different processes that produce the book, and holds it up as the contradictory symbol of a disordered mind. Reading bibliographic conventions, just like reading grammatical ones, allows the reviewer to represent a book through its parts, but pushes the logic of synecdoche to its limits in taking leave of this author, “we trust for ever”.

At the final limits of synecdochic logic lies the “personality”, or personal attack, in which private details about an author’s life are discussed instead of his or her book and used as a pretext for its evaluation. The above review of Ritson may already have felt particularly personal, but there are many other instances that go far further, holding up the private behaviours or even the body of the author up to scrutiny in place of the work. My next chapter treats this famous practice in detail; but for the present I here introduce two examples—one personal, and one based on poetic ‘school’.

Personalities use private information about the author to effect a judgment of a literary work. In a sense, they break out of the self-contained pages of the text to provide decisive information on its value. In a review of Percival Stockdale’s *Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets*, for instance, the *Edinburgh* reviewer concludes a set of verbal criticisms with a pithy dismissal of the book: “We take our leave of these rhetorical criticisms; without much admiration for the author, and certainly without any disposition to pass a severe sentence on him. He tells us he is old; and leaves us to infer that he is not opulent. We hope, therefore, that his publication will succeed; and are positive that it has a great deal more merit than many that have succeeded” (*ER* 12:23 [April 1808] 82). Despite the book’s purported merit, the reviewer refers its true value outside the text in the form of support for the purportedly poor author. Placing the book aggressively back within its place in the market—as a book that would have been better published by subscription than at the author’s own expense—the reviewer places financial concerns over literary ones, thereby denigrating the book’s contents.

In other cases of personality, literary belonging becomes the cause for dismissal. In April 1818, the *Quarterly Review* published the review of Keats' *Endymion* that Shelley would later call the cause of his death. In this negative and personal review, the idea of the poetic school is used to damn Keats by association. The reviewer openly admits to not having read the work, citing an experiment with its incomprehensibility as the reason for this dereliction of duty:

Reviewers have been sometimes accused of not reading the works which they affected to criticize. On the present occasion we shall anticipate the author's complaint, and honestly confess that we have not read his work. Not that we have been wanting in our duty—far from it—indeed, we have made efforts almost as superhuman as the story itself appears to be, to get through it; but with the fullest stretch of our perseverance, we are forced to confess that we have not been able to struggle beyond the first of the four books of which this Poetic Romance consists. We should extremely lament this want of energy, or whatever it may be, on our parts, were it not for one consolation—namely, that we are no better acquainted with the meaning of the book through which we have so painfully toiled, than we are with that of the three which we have not looked into. (*QR* 19:37 [April 1818] 204)

Despite his lack of comprehension, the reviewer does not hesitate to evaluate the book, hinging his condemnation on Keats' "Cockney School" connection with Leigh Hunt: Keats is nothing more than "unhappily a disciple of the new school of what has been somewhere called Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language" (*QR* 19:37 [April 1818] 204). The poetic faults of which he is accused are the same as the ones leveled at Hunt: the invention of new words and the selection of inappropriate subjects for poetry. Keats' book need not be read because it has already been read in Hunt's earlier *Story of Rimini*. While in terms of vitriol, the seasoned reader of Romantic periodicals may find this review rather tame, it nevertheless does, in a sense, kill Keats: the assertion of unreadability annihilates his act of authorship. Indeed, even his identity is undermined when the reviewer muses that Keats cannot "be his real name, for we almost doubt that any man in his sense would put his real name to such a rhapsody" (*QR* 19:37 [April 1818] 204).

From verbal criticism to bibliographic ironies to personal attacks, the play of synecdoche in post-*Edinburgh* book reviewing may appear further and further removed from the kind of helpful anthologizing moves that were practiced on Clarkson. To say the least, the ridicule that characterized the more hostile reviews can be difficult to reconcile with the reviewer's stated position of helpfulness. However, ridicule appears hand in hand with synecdochic representation, with the *Edinburgh Review* going so far as to articulate a theory to support its practice. Ridicule is not undertaken in all cases; for the *Edinburgh*, especially, there are always a handful of topics of such political or moral concern that they require more serious handling. As John Clive explains, "these weapons [of ridicule] were to be employed only when minority views were clearly involved, with reader opinion automatically assumed to be in harmony with editorial views; and that sweet reasonableness must be resorted to when this was not the case" (91). Thus, serious debates about the abolition of the slave trade and Catholic emancipation are treated to fairer argumentation. A July 1808 review of the *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* reveals the ramifications these political goals have on the reviewer's practice:

There are works of so much moral worth, that it would imply a deadness of feeling in the critic, if, in reviewing them, he did not abate some part of his wonted attention to the minutiae of style or arrangement. That which a deep sense of the importance of the subject had withheld from the author's notice during the composition, should gain only a subordinate degree of attention from the reader. Not unfrequently, indeed, the style itself will become more noble and affecting on the whole, in consequence of this neglect of rhetorical accuracy. (*ER* 12:24 [July 1808] 355)

In the morally valuable work, rhetoric and accuracy are placed at opposite poles, almost mutually exclusive features that the reviewer will have to overlook in order to advance the periodical's moral purposes. In these exceptional cases, the reviewer ignores the instinct or even the duty to ridicule in order to produce accuracy at the expense of rhetorical style. Other periodicals display a similar pragmatism: the *Quarterly Review* resists ridiculing those of higher rank or with important

social or financial connections to the periodical itself.¹¹ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, which will be explored at length in the ensuing chapter, appears to have been the one periodical that happily ridiculed just about anyone—often praising them by turns as well.

Ridicule is excluded from serious moral interventions, instead being reserved for what the *Edinburgh* calls the “smaller vices—those which make up the profligacy of an individual and the corruption of a people, [and] are committed by thousands from mere carelessness and vanity, or from example and mistaken opinions” (*ER* 8:15 [April 1806] 212). These vices are identified as such in a review of Maria Edgeworth's *Lenora* that sheds considerable light on how the *Edinburgh* reviewers conceived of their own project. Edgeworth, the reviewer explains, is trying to correct the “small vices” in *Lenora*, but she is misguided in her method. Such vices need to be attacked with “ridicule instead of reprobation”: “It is a rash, and for the most part a vain attempt, to think of appealing to a man's *conscience* against practices which are sanctioned by all around him, and in which he indulges without any distinct feeling of depravity” (*ER* 8:15 [April 1806] 212). Ridicule forms the basis of what is elsewhere termed “that wholesome discipline of derision” (*ER* 9:17 [October 1806] 147).

This “wholesome discipline” has a variety of applications. In some cases, it is deplored as a social corrective for isolated writers. Without it, isolated geniuses would suffer from an inflated sense of their powers. Ridicule in the periodical press provides a role of bringing the intellectual community together and holding it to a more accurate standard:

We need only to run over the names of Darwin, Day, Beddoes, Southey, Coleridge, and Priestley, to make ourselves perfectly intelligible. It is partly, no doubt, because there are ships in a river, but chiefly, we believe, for want to that wholesome discipline of derision to which every thing is subjected in London, and which amply atones for the finer beauties, which it nips and shrinks, by repressing the fungous excrescences of

¹¹ See above, footnote 2.

presumption and extravagant vanity. There is something, too, in the perpetual presence of the most permanent aristocracies of wealth, office, and rank, which tends to humble the pretensions of genius, and teaches aspiring men to measure their own importance by a more extended standard. (*ER* 9:17 [October 1806] 147)

In a conservative gesture, this *Edinburgh* reviewer collapses ridicule with the effects of a strictly delineated class system as a way of teaching genius its proper place. Ridicule serves to institute the urban—not as a site of class mixing but as a site of class delineation—into the provincial areas where insignificant authors might otherwise fail to perceive themselves as such. The reviewer’s ridicule supplies the place of the personal interactions of society; it recreates the practices of deference and the occasional slights that would inform these rural geniuses of their proper place.

But this method is not only applied to isolated authors like Priestly and Coleridge. Indeed, the intensity of ridicule, as well as the degree of derision that it contains, increases as the reviewers turn their attention to books by women and members of the lower classes. In the second attack Methodist John Styles, the *Edinburgh* reviewer explain the reason that ridicule is an acceptable method of chastisement of ‘vermin’:

They must all be caught, killed and cracked, in the manner, and by the instruments which are found most efficacious to their destruction; and the more they cry out, the greater plainly is the skill used against them, we are convinced a little laughter will do them more harm than all the arguments in the world. Such men as the author before us cannot understand when they are outargued; but he has given us a specimen, from his irritability, that he fully comprehends when he has become the object of universal contempt and derision. (*ER* 14:27 [April 1809] 41)

Styles, as one of these literary vermin that plague Britain, is seen as incapable of understanding an argumentative review. Instead, he is best dealt with by ridicule which he can at least *feel*. The affective experience of ridicule transcends class boundaries and permits the reviewer to cut through ignorance to exert an influence on his recalcitrant target. The *Edinburgh Review* presents such ridiculing personal attacks as having a powerful impact on all types of authors—despite their different class positions. By stretching synecdoche through grammar, typography, and personal

attack, the post-*Edinburgh* book review adjudicates claims to authorship, and singles out imperfect performances of textuality or authorship as means to represent and dismiss huge numbers books, often enforcing class and gender hierarchies under the cover of bibliographic or grammatical convention.

III: The reviewing persona – Lawyers, tyrants, and cannibals

Reviewers perhaps have never been viewed with great enthusiasm by the authors upon whom they plied their trade, but in the periodical culture of the Romantic period, the antagonism was performed to a new extent. In this performance, the reviewer plays the part of manipulative lawyer, bloodthirsty tyrant, or savage cannibal, oppressing authors from a place of unassailable advantage. Beneath the surface, however, authors and reviewers were more permeable categories. It is only by understanding the reviewing voice as a persona performed, or a role played, that the book reviewer's connection to subsequent performances of authorship can be perceived.

Authors under review were quick to respond to the new reviewing practices of the *Edinburgh*, noting especially the implicit hostility toward their profession. In his 1816 *Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*, Wordsworth railed against a press that treated authors “with the same disregard of reserve, which may sometimes be expedient in composing the history of men who have borne an active part in the world” (17). When it comes to “authors, considered merely as authors”, he insists “our business is with their books,—to understand and to enjoy them” (17). Wordsworth puts forward a view of authors as disappearing behind their books, protected by “penalties of law, conventions of manner, and personal fear” while they are living, and owed a similar deference in death (15). The *Edinburgh Review* and its inheritors manifestly did *not* share this view. John Ring's 1807 *Beauties of the Edinburgh Review, alias the Stinkpot of Literature*

collected a wide array of early rebuttals to controversial reviews, providing a clear picture of just what about the new regime of book reviewing was considered most unacceptable.¹²

The *Edinburgh Review*'s respondents focus on two main areas of transgression: personal attack and misrepresentation. These transgressions are telling, corresponding as they do to the *Edinburgh*'s two innovations of acidity and selection. Ring's battery of respondents are often angered and hurt by the personal attacks, but they also recognize them as feeding a particularly human, even authorial, desire. A Mr. Cockburne is quoted:

I am well aware, that *the success of your Review depends upon its asperity*. Its editors have evidently discovered, that authors are commonly *jealous of each other; and love to read of each other's faults*.—They know also, that those persons who *cannot write* are envious of those who *can*; and equally delight in reading of their errors.—Thus, by continually finding fault, all palates are gratified; and numbers are tempted to come to the feast; while the high seasoning of the *Edinburgh Review* gives an additional zest to every morsel. (Ring, 6)

The personal foibles of the authors are supplied as entertainment to the review's readers (many of them authors themselves); jealousy provides the motivation and enjoyment behind this aspect of the review. But the *Edinburgh*'s respondents attribute this excess of ill-will to a deeper motivation than a cynical financial interest—they accuse the reviewers of hostility to the pursuit of scientific knowledge, and even to authorship. As the *Medical and Chirurgigal Review* opined in September 1804, "these Reviewers have executed the task which they have undertaken [...] in

¹² This early set of rebuttals is illustrative of another point of confusion with the respect of the *Edinburgh*'s early practice. Marilyn Butler has asserted that "the seductively readable style of "slashing" criticism for which the *Edinburgh* became famous was a weapon almost entirely reserved for popular writing" rather than the "natural sciences, moral philosophy and political economy" that it was new (for a book review) in addressing (131-2), but Ring's collection contravenes this impression. With the exception of the radical orator John Thelwall, the respondents are primarily authors of books of science and political economy: the Earl of Lauderdale (*Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*), Dr Thomas Thompson (*System of Chemistry*), Dr Robert Jackson (*Remarks on the Constitution of the Medical Department of the British Army*), Dr. Thomas Young (physician and polymath, attacked in Vol II and IX). While this group reflects Ring's selections rather than the rate of attacks or of feeling attacked by the *Edinburgh*, it does demonstrate that scientific authors were also subjected to some of the *Edinburgh*'s more characteristic practices of personal attack and disingenuous excerpting. It is our first indication that the reputation that the *Edinburgh Review* has acquired for attacking primarily poets may be a misstatement: clearly, other authors felt attacked by the periodical, and felt the need to respond, argumentatively, to those attacks.

a manner which defies all liberality of sentiment and generous feeling, evincing at once a malignant disposition in the writers, and an anxious wish, as it would seem, to crush every attempt to extend the boundaries of science” (quoted in Ring, 71, original italics). The reviewer’s personal malignancy is yoked firmly with a resistance to the progress of knowledge. The *Edinburgh Review* “makes war on the whole host of authors; and mangles them without mercy, for the sake of amusing the public” (Ring, 1). Ring’s collection of authors feel that reviewing in the *Edinburgh* is a war on science, a war on authors, or even a war on authorship. It depends on violence to both books and authorial reputations as the core of the entertainment it offers. Like the “wholesome discipline of derision”, this approach sacrifices the author to the reader’s benefit.

While personal attacks were the *Edinburgh Review*’s most sensational transgressions, the bulk of Ring’s collection is devoted to distortions based on selection and synecdochic representation. Authors are most strident and exhaustive in refuting these misrepresentations of their texts. John Thelwall, for instance, in his lengthy 1804 reply, helpfully taxonomizes the various distortions of content that the *Edinburgh* practices, denominating them different kinds of “Jeffs” in dubious honor of the editor Francis Jeffrey. Beginning with overt and implied falsehoods, Thelwall quickly moves down to the more insidious problems of selective paraphrase and quotations. For instance, the “*Jeff invertive*” is defined as “inverting the order of circumstances, sentences, or parts of sentences; so as to make them suggest conclusions very different from what they would authorise in their natural order”; while the “*Jeff stradulative*” consists in “*striding*, at pleasure, over any number of intervening circumstances in a narration, or argument,—so as to produce an apparent association between facts or premises entirely disjointed” (11-4). Jeffs of conjunction, disjunction, and omission round out Thelwall’s list of textual distortions practiced by the *Edinburgh Review*. Thelwall’s list reveals the sense of permeability and instability that the processes of excerpting can introduce into an author’s

relationship to their own work. Indeed, in a footnote, Thelwall falls into the reviewer's Borgesian paradox when he observes that "to quote all the falshoods, prevarications, misrepresentation, foistings and forgeries this curious piece of Criticism exhibits, would be to transcribe the whole article; for it is a mere tissue of these *tropes* and *ornaments* of rhetoric, from beginning to end" (9). By responding to their reviewers, authors like Thelwall become attuned to the problems of synecdochic representation in their own work, railing against the excerpts and digests that substitute for interpretation. They identify excerpting as a rhetorical activity, restructuring books in order to indict them.

In contrast to authors like Thelwall et. al—reduced to defending in pamphlets the coherence of a book that will not be read—the reviewer is consolidated and strengthened as a persona, both in the pages of the Review, and in the pamphlet riposte. Thelwall's choice of Jeffrey is indicative of the bedrock on which the reviewer's persona is founded. According to Mark Schoenfield: "Francis Jeffrey's anonymity as the Edinburgh Reviewer [...] did not obscure his presence but broadened it both across contributors (who complained about their work being edited beyond recognition) and across other journals that adopted the Edinburgh's standards of professionalism" (125). Through Jeffrey's prominence, the periodical reviewer emerges as what Schoenfield calls a "corporate" figure, a persona through which responsibility is diffused and collectivized (3). This collective identity brought together the various contributors, lending them a common voice based on the persona of the journal's editor. This is to say that the Jeffrey persona became, through the popularity of the *Edinburgh Review* and its influence on other reviewing periodicals, *the* template for professional reviewing more generally. To write a book review would mean to adopt the conventions of this Jeffrey-like voice—to practice, as Thelwall would have it, the various Jeffs.

Yet Schoenfield's model of the corporate reviewer is synchronic, and does not register the evolution of the reviewing persona from the *Edinburgh's* founding through to later literary magazines. Early responses like Thelwall's draw heavily of biographical information about Jeffrey to construct this antagonistic figure, but later iterations shift to a metaphoric level. That is to say that through rebuttals and responses, the reviewer moves from being considered as a corporate clone of Jeffrey to a more generalized outsider or savage. Thus, when in 1804, Thelwall unites reviewers under the practice of Jeffs he lends them Jeffrey's characteristics. The *Edinburgh Reviewer* is

some miss-begotten monster, of equivocal race, half *Advocate* and half *Reviewer*,---who, inflated with vanity, and bursting with venomous gall, *hires himself out*, alternately, to the bookseller and to the bar; yet maintains the unity of his essence, amid the duplicity of his character, by the consistent facility with which he discharges his *virus*, either from the tongue, or from the pen, on that side of the question which is likely to reward him best (64, original italics).

The private detail that Jeffrey, along with other *Edinburgh* originators Francis Horner and Henry Brougham, was an underemployed lawyer, lends shape to Thelwall's accusation of mercenary motivations. In other cases, the reviewer-as-lawyer trope is turned to attack reviewers for their theatricality. Dr Thomas Young complains: "they have *much less the appearance of an impartial discussion of a long-disputed question in natural philosophy, than of the buffoonery of a theatrical entertainment*, or of *the jests of a pert advocate*, endeavouring to place in a ridiculous light the evidence of his adversary" (quoted in Ring, 14, original italics). For Young, the misrepresentation that arises from selection is not merely unscientific, it is *lawyerly*: Dr Young finds in the theatricality of a trial an analogy for the kind of manipulation that his text has undergone. Building the reviewer persona around the lawyer, these interventions seek to give a stable identity to the anonymized voice, collaborating with the periodical itself in stabilizing the sense of what it means to be addressed by it.

But this reviewer-as-lawyer trope does not survive the professionalization of reviewing. Schoenfield's sense of the corporate reviewer as a version of Francis Jeffrey does not hold through the actual standardization of reviewing as a source of income. As the *Edinburgh's* model of paying all reviewers well was more generally imitated, Jeffrey's original profession as a lawyer became irrelevant to the representation of reviewers. Instead, the reviewing persona was troped as a social outsider, branded with more metaphoric indications of a self-serving, manipulative, and predatory nature. Thus, in 1809, Byron would describe reviewers in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* as "these young tyrants, by themselves misplaced,/ Combined usurpers on the throne of taste" and James Hogg, himself a periodical writer, would call them "a numerous race of beings [...] who feed themselves upon the brains of their own species" (Hogg, xxxviii). At the apogee of periodical controversy, reached with the death of *London Magazine* editor John Scott during a duel with a *Blackwood's Magazine* associate, the precipitating conflict was launched by Scott's description of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* as the "Mohock Magazine", characterizing its editor and writers as little more than savages. Like lawyers, savages, cannibals, and tyrants are all figures of threat, each playing by a different set of rules than the authors they attack. In all cases, the reviewer participates in a system that authors cannot perceive or understand. The *Edinburgh Review* even embraced these tropes of violence with abandon. The review of the vegetarian Ritson, for instance, flaunted as a badge of honor "our obdurate and carnivorous souls": "We have little fear of [...] being moved to appease the goddess of criticism with the body of a scribbler; still less of turning our teeth and nails from the pages to the carcasses of authors" (*ER* 1:1 [October 1802] 133). The personal attacks on authors' still-living carcasses are a particular delicacy for the reviewer, an indulgence of his true nature.

Thus the collective, anonymous reviewing persona enables a series of representations of reviewing behavior as dangerous and revolutionary, without requiring a truly stable corporate

brand. Rather, this reviewing pose was perpetually caught in a kind of push-pull between obfuscation and exposure. While in some ways the warring parties could not be more separate—reviewers were addressed as tyrants and cannibals, accused of preying on the wounded book author—the lines between reviewer and author were extremely fungible. Two of the period’s most hotly discussed poets, Robert Southey and Leigh Hunt, made more money and produced more work in periodicals than in any other form. Walter Scott, meanwhile, not only reviewed himself in the *Edinburgh* but helped plan and found its Tory doppelganger, the *Quarterly Review*. Romantic periodical writing was less the work of a great anonymous underclass than a publication *role*, in and out of which many writers moved. In fact, the tension between book authors and reviewers in the Romantic period is simultaneously real and performed. While many players emerged as amphibious figures, moving between reviewing and book authorship where possible, it was those who fell wholly into either category who experienced the antagonism as real.

Reviewers themselves drove an interest in the private lives of authors, and in decoding systems of pseudonym and anonymity that ultimately reflected back onto their own practice. Authors like Sir Alexander Boswell objected to the asymmetry of named authorship and anonymous reviewing, calling for reviewers to reveal themselves. In his own, anonymous, *Epistle to the Edinburgh Reviewers*, he demands an equal revelation of the reviewer’s personal attributes:

Let not a doctor’s *wig* your satire aid;
 So poor an ally must your cause degrade.
 Patterns you are of *style*, no doubt, of *grace*;
 Then prythee, let us have each critic face;
 To each essay prefix the learned head,
 That lines and features may at once be read.
 Thus he, whom now we deem or black or yellow,
 May prove, if colour’d well, a pretty fellow.
 If more than usual sharp his phiz, or fuller,
 More clever we shall rate his works or duller. (5)

Adopting an anonymous pose, Boswell calls out the reviewers for their own anonymity, demanding the face of the reviewer be affixed to every review so that their criticisms might be judged by their physiognomies—just as reviewers often did to authors (for further discussion, see Chapter 2). Boswell makes two different and simultaneous moves to put authors on the same level as reviewers: by writing anonymously he attacks those who have attacked him under that same mode; and in his attack, he demands that they be named authors, as he was in the book they reviewed. Boswell's demand then, is less for one system over another (anonymity versus named authorship) but for parity between the author and reviewer in that respect. The actual disparity that the reviewers continued to manipulate provided one of their main engagements with authorship. At its apogee, it involved the invention of the fictitious named author behind the periodical author (as I will discuss of the *London Magazine* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in Chapter 4), but even at the early moment of Boswell's reply, the asymmetry of reviewing practice produced a desire to crack corporate identity open.

As the many indignant responses to the *Edinburgh*, the *Quarterly*, and *Blackwood's Magazine* reveal, book-authors in the period recognized reviewers as participants in (and even victims of) the same publication system, stressing their essential likeness as a reason for solidarity. For instance, the author of the anonymous 1809 *Letter to the Young Gentlemen of the Edinburgh Review* emphasizes the precarious position shared by the reviewers and the authors they review: "Now surely, all this is very cruel and very unreasonable, considering that these persons, whom you thus maltreat, are your own kindred and brethren of the trade; placed in the same circumstances of needy dependence, and of griping penury, with yourselves" (17). The reviewer writes under the same conditions as the complaining author:

You are reading to dash at any thing, and to throw out your sneers and sarcasms at any persons, for the sake of selling your book. Like other authors so circumstanced, you bow

and cringe to your patrons with most convenient humility; and devour their savoury dinners, as often as you can, with most condescending appetites (16).

Positioning both reviewers and book-authors in a position of dependence, requiring the patronage of their employers as much as the authors require it of them, the author of this pamphlet stresses the unprofessional aspects of literary work. In calling for solidarity, then, this author reminds the reviewer that his advantage lies with the advancement of “the trade”, citing how “the Minister heaps every year new taxes on paper; the people, burdened with the pressure of the times, think much more of paying their butcher’s and baker’s bills, than of buying your fine works of wit and taste” (18). The reviewer’s own self-presentation as patron of literary work, however, challenged this appeal to solidarity. As patrons, it was their duty to dole out attention in the form of excerpts and reviews, performing as gatekeepers between the *roles* of author and reviewer, rather than between their literal persons.

The conventional address to the author adopted by book reviews is to a great extent a pose, an unfolding joke that is often delivered at the expense of first-time and less-connected authors—especially women and those of the lower classes. Despite protestations of concern for fledgling authors and suggests for improvement, the *Edinburgh* insisted on the actual insignificance of their response to great authors. A January 1814 review of Edgeworth’s *Patronage* advances the convenient theory that the great author can never be negatively impacted by criticism:

Powerful genius, we are persuaded, will not be repressed even by unjust castigation; nor will the most excessive praise than can be lavished by sincere admiration ever abate the efforts that are fitted to attain to excellence. Our alleged severity upon a youthful production has not prevented the noble author [Byron] from becoming the first poet of his time; and the panegyrics upon more than one female writer, with which we have been upbraided, have not relaxed their meritorious exertions to add to the instruction and amusement of their age. (*ER* 22:44 [January 1814] 416)

By establishing the insignificance of any wrong judgments of good writers, the *Edinburgh* reviewer deflects concerns about earlier missteps. Ultimately, it is not the reviews but the

evidence of perseverance and further publication that will divide the writers into their classes. The ability to persevere through bad reviews comes to signal a good writer and the Review reserves its right to reverse its original judgments in light of future works. But perhaps most importantly, this statement of insignificance begs the question of the reviewer's real target. The bad reviews can be seen as a cover for the education and intimidation of the real audience: the reader and would-be author.

When writing *as* a reviewer, one took on the pose of hostility to the author and the book, breaking both down into the pieces that would most gratify or serve the imagined reader. The pose of the book review was didactic, as Ina Ferris describes it “aimed at the reformation of readers” explicitly interested in “what was—or should be—read” (25). Yet through synecdochic representation, book reviews produced as much as commented on reading material. As lawyers, cannibals, and tyrants, reviewers performed antagonism as part of the periodical's mission, dramatizing this conflict as part of the entertainment of the review. By cementing the importance of persona performance to periodical production, the book reviewers laid the groundwork for the later innovations of magazine writers, stressing that the true master of literary language is one who can manipulate systems of exposure or of synecdoche effectively. The antagonistic performance of the reviewer, and especially the violence enacted on the uninitiated, serves as a warning against publication, and narrows the category of author to those who can withstand the performance of hostility, and ultimately thrive under it.

IV: Conclusion – Surface Reading?

In the preceding sections, I have explored how Romantic book reviewing might be better understood as synecdoche rather than the expected summary and analysis. Selection and ‘acid’ make synecdoche an attractive and efficient method of review. The motivations for this shift to

selection may appear obscure, but it makes renewed sense when considered alongside our recent conceptualizations of distant and surface reading: both place a valorization of modes of reading that are not deep or exhaustive and explore a different kind of engagement with textuality.

The concept of surface reading arises from a group of critics who work largely on novels published in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Collectively, these interventions seek to push back against a model of suspicious or symptomatic reading that would privilege the hidden meaning of the texts over the evident ones. By refocusing on the surface—understood in various ways as material, textual, or obvious—these critics seek to supplement the political and ideological reading of such novels with an approach that takes them more on their own terms. Thus, in their introduction to the special issue of *Representations*, “The Way We Read Now”, Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best characterize surface reading as an approach in which “it is enough simply to register what the text itself is saying” or where the preoccupations of a text are treated as “genuine”: for example, “taking friendship in novels to signify friendship is thus not mere tautology; it highlights something true and visible on the text’s surface that symptomatic reading had ironically rendered invisible” (8, 12). Such a focus on the visible and the evident is specifically coded by its proponents as a reaction to the blind spots of the now-dominant symptomatic reading.

While Best and Marcus make no claims for the newness of the surface approach (9), they understand it as a recent evolution in literary criticism and focus more on the appropriateness of the approach to our own moment than on its historical iterations. This focalization makes sense for the collection of essays in *Representations*, but the idea of surface—and its problems—are integral to the post-*Edinburgh* book reviewing project. The modes of surface reading enumerated by Best and Marcus correspond to reviewing techniques explored above. The reading of “*Surface as materiality*” is the synecdochic stretch made with Colman and Ritson above, where expensive

format or bad typography can be used to sum up a book's merits. *Surface as literary language* appears not only in the policing of Mary Robinson's metaphors and her failure to meet literary standards but also in the extensive quotations that each review generally contains. Romantic book reviews even reproduce and recirculate surfaces when they reprint the texts that they review. *Surface as the location of patterns across texts* meanwhile, is practiced according to Best and Marcus by the critic who acts as "anatomist" or "taxonomist" (11). We can see its like in the pattern of grouping poets into "schools" and judging them accordingly—as was done to Keats and Hunt, or Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. The modes of surface reading are neither dependent on computer technologies nor the product of a late and exhausted turn in twenty-first century criticism, but an essential part of reading and representation that has historically accompanied 'real' or 'legitimate' criticism.

A comparison of these reading practices is, I believe, mutually revelatory. Separated as they are by time and conditions, they nevertheless display a continued historical need for an alternative to deeper reading. Yet in affective stance and use of persona they diverge strongly, highlighting the investments of each. One of Best and Marcus' main contentions is that the attention to surface is "an affective and ethical stance" that "involves accepting texts, deferring to them instead of mastering or using them as objects" (12). They contend that "in relinquishing the freedom dream that accompanies the work of demystification, we might be groping toward some equally valuable, if less glamorous, states of mind" (17). Likewise Eve Sedgwick's more open, less oppositional stance of "reparative reading"; likewise Moretti's insistence that his distant reading practice has taught him "a double lesson, of humility and euphoria at the same time: humility for what literary history has accomplished so far (not enough), and euphoria for what still remains to be done (a lot)" (2). This emphasis on humility as a key aspect of the surface-reading stance, and the way it damns symptomatic reading as egotistical by implication, may

account for a good portion of the negative reception of the surface reading manifestoes. But comparison with the antagonistic reviewer persona in Romantic period book reviewing reveals the extent to which this rhetoric of humility works to *naturalize* the choices that contemporary surface readers make.

Surface reading, as generated out of the *Representations* issue, does little to address the problems of the selection of its objects of study. This selection runs according to two models: In some cases, it functions as part of a supplementary or corrective project, where surface readers return to works that have been already studied extensively and reread them in order to destabilize the current critical primacy of symptomatic reading. Under this model, surface readers avoid the need to theorize their choice of texts. Alternately, distant-reading projects like those of Franco Moretti draw on computer processing in order to avoid the need to select at all, reading exhaustively, albeit distantly, in an attempt to sidestep selection bias. Problematically, of course, selection has already figured in textual survival, and both kinds of reading projects depend on previous habits of selection in under-interrogated ways.

The version of surface reading we can identify in Romantic periodicals is, instead, obsessed with selection. The innovation of the *Edinburgh Review* is its emphasis on—rather than occlusion of—the selection process and its play with the identity and persona of selectors. The practice of identifying literary schools, for instance, helps to map the literary field. Excerpting identifies the parts of books that deserves the closest attention. Reading the materiality of a book instead of its content accelerates the reviewing process. By stressing rather than masking selection, reviewers are forced to engage with the problem of who does the selecting—the dominance of Jeffrey's editorial persona and the accompanying development of the reviewing pose are a clear reflection of the power that accompanies acts of selection. The humility topos that Best and Marcus attach to their practice of surface reading is not endemic to the mode.

Surfaces might be self-evident, but the choice of which surfaces to read is vexed, as any reader to the Romantic periodical itself will know: print is overwhelming at historical moments other than our own.

The conditions that produce the Romantic period's foray into widespread surface (or, more specifically, synecdochic) reading are largely analogous to our own. In both cases we have an impression of crushing excess, and the need to somehow take stock of it. An ongoing trope in Romantic book reviewing registers a problem of excessive publication, often labelled as "bookmaking". The bookmakers of Romantic Britain are not, like their contemporary American counterparts, criminals—but the book-reviewers were certainly eager to deem them such. When Henry Brougham panned Byron's first production, *Hours of Idleness*, in the *Edinburgh*, he found the author guilty of producing a superfluous book. Byron's protestations of his youth and inexperience constituted "a plea available only to the defendant; no plaintiff can offer it as a supplementary ground of action". Byron is not allowed to use this to deflect criticism from his own, voluntary publication:

Thus, if any suit could be brought against Lord Byron, for the purpose of compelling him to put into court a certain quantity of poetry; and if judgment were given against him; it is highly probable that an exception would be taken, were he to deliver *for poetry*, the contents of this volume. To this he might plead *minority*; but as he now makes voluntary tender of the article, he hath no right to sue, on that ground, for the price in good current praise, should the goods be unmarketable. This is our view of the law on the point, and we dare to say, so it will be ruled. (*ER* 11:22 [January 1808] 285)

The move to place oneself in public view is, here, a crime, and authors must display sufficiently good work to acquit themselves of the transgression. Romantic reviewers responded to this sense of excess with an implementation of synecdochic reading—which permitted the 'surface' element of Byron's minority, for instance, to determine the fate of his book.

Lamenting their position as people oppressed by the excess of new publications, book reviewers became obsessed with the problem of mechanized publication. In an inversion of the

potential that distant readers like Moretti see in our ability to digitally process a mass of texts, reviewers feared how mechanized production compromised the publishing world. Arising overwhelmingly out of their reviews of histories, travel accounts, and new editions of older poetry, the charge of bookmaking identified books that were constructed by digesting (usually poorly) already extant accounts or materials. A July 1806 *Edinburgh* review of Mawman's *Excursion to the Highlands of Scotland*, for instance, took exception to what they described as a mechanized system of book production:

A cotton-mill which rolls, cards, and spins at the same instant, is a machine less dreadful to the insulated industry of individuals, than an author and a traveller like Mr Mawman; and unless something can be done to restore the ancient distinction of ranks and subdivisions of labour, we foresee nothing but the most dreadful of confusion, and the most ruinous dissensions in the great commonwealth of letters (*ER* 8:15 [April 1806] 284-5).

Imagining a gang of Luddite authors who rebel against upstarts like Mawman, the reviewer admonishes: “we think it but a duty to say, that if the experiment should be persisted in, we cannot answer for the personal safety of those who, by depriving them of bread, let loose a host of journeyman writers, in whom the fury of hunger is superadded to the ‘fine frenzy’ of inspiration” (*ER* 8:15 [April 1806] 285). Oppressed by a new mechanical system of text production, good authors struggle to maintain their position.

Readers, along with authors and reviewers, the *Edinburgh* alleged, were threatened by this new excess of books. Bookmaking oppresses readerly rights: “we are deeply interested, for our own sake, as well as that of the public, in entering our protest against this mode of book-making [...] it is obvious, that unless the author's mercy temper his strength, the rights of the courteous reader are in no small peril” (*ER* 3:6 [January 1804] 442). The reviewer is held up here as an important representative figure. It combatting the deluge of books, reader and reviewer are allied against the author: they are both people who will suffer by from publishing excesses.

Interestingly, though, this is not a financial issue: the reader's rights are not violated here because of money paid for the book but because of an assumed kind of reading-compulsion in which the mere fact of the book's being published demands that it must be read. In other words, this conceit is based on substituting the reader for the reviewer and vice versa: it makes the reviewer into the exemplary reader, takes his experience (of forced reading removed from the purchase price of the book) as the norm of the experience. This collapse of reader and reviewer makes the problem of excess books not a market problem, but a problem of the sheer impossibility of exhaustiveness.

In objecting to bookmaking, the reviewers complained not only about quality but about quantity; they—and by proxy their readers—are oppressed by the productions of the authors. Struggling to review and respond to this excess, they focused not, as Moretti or the eighteenth-century book review might have them do, on the ideal of totality, but on the representative power of the synecdoche. The synecdoche is a low-tech, high-concept solution to the problem of reading. Through the practice of proper selection, reviewers advanced a version of surface reading that lies at the birth of the modern critical project. In the days before machine-assisted reading, this figurative solution stood in for and highlighted the problems of a fantasy of totality. But whether we fetishize the value of total reading, or invest in synecdochic representation, the end goal is produce an impression of the literary field that is complete, up-to-date, and—most importantly—efficient. We need to acknowledge and accept the goals of the surface, distant, or synecdochic reading mode in order to better understand them. In the following chapter, rather than damning the Romantic book reviewers for not carrying out a critical project more like close reading, I will advocate for the integrity of the project they did devise and how it attempts to respond to the problems of their moment.

Chapter 2: The Practice of Personality

In the new economy of reviewing, the personal details of an author's life acquired a great practical value. As the preceding chapter has outlined, reviewers came to focus on only a few, emblematic aspects of a text in order to deliver a judgement about its merits. Whether reading punctuation or private life, the synecdochic method allowed for more efficient reviewing, albeit at the expense of a growing antagonism between the role of author and reviewer. In this chapter, I will consider the scandal of the author's personal life in greater depth: it was the personal that would prove the most controversial synecdochic technique of the Romantic period, and its most revelatory. These personal attacks, called "personalities", were the hallmark of "bad" Romantic reviewing. During the Romantic period, personalities were most likely to draw accusations of laziness and rebuttals; and in more recent criticism, they have been used as evidence of a decline in the integrity of book reviewers. And yet, these "personalities" were also the site of greatest creativity and literary excess on the part of reviewers. They demonstrate the process by which book reviewers attempted to wrest literary reputation from the authors they reviewed and exemplify the new mode of reading—both critical and entertaining—that Romantic periodicals proposed to provide.

I: "Personality" as Personal Attack

It is impossible to introduce "personality" without beginning with *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Founded in 1817 and run by a group of brilliant young Tories, the periodical has long epitomized the nastiness of Romantic periodical culture. Its writers were the masters of the "personality", constructing searing depictions of the personal lives of contemporary authors as a means of discrediting their works. These attacks were incredibly successful. Attacks on William Hazlitt provoked him to sue for £2000 in damages due to

plummeting book sales and attendance at his public lectures (Wu, 255-6), while those on the *London Magazine* resulted in the famous duel in which the *London*'s editor John Scott died at the hands of a *Blackwood's* representative (Cronin, 1-5). Much critical ink has already been spilled over the magazine's famous attacks on the "Cockney School of Poetry and Prose"—its reviews of John Keats, Leigh Hunt, and William Hazlitt have become shorthand for nasty rhetoric of Romantic periodicals.¹³ Penned primarily by John Gibson Lockhart and published under the signature "Z", these cutting reviews employ "personality" consistently, revealing or inventing something personal about these authors in order to attack them. Yet this is more than simple slander; in each of these cases the "personality" functions as a means of evaluating a writer's work. By evaluating the books through synecdoche, however, *Blackwood's* writers do more than abridge reviewing labor, they also compete with Hunt, Hazlitt, and Keats in displaying their own literary virtuosity.

Thus, in October 1817, *Blackwood's* fired its first volley at the Cockney School with this characterization of poet, essayist, and periodical editor Leigh Hunt:

The poetry of Mr. Hunt is such as might be expected from the personal character and habits of its author. As a vulgar man is perpetually labouring to be genteel—in like manner, the poetry of this man is always on the stretch to be grand. He has been allowed to look for a moment from the antechamber to the saloon, and mistaken the waving feathers and the painted floor for the *sine qua non's* of elegant society. He would fain be always tripping and waltzing, and is sorry that he cannot be allowed to walk about in the morning with yellow breeches, and flesh-coloured stockings. He sticks an artificial rosebud into his button hole in the midst of winter. (*BEM* 2:7 [October 1817]: 39)

Hunt's poetry is depicted not through a close analysis of its stylistic faults, but through an analogy with his clumsy social climbing. Picking out articles of dandified apparel (the yellow

¹³ Peter Murphy's "Impersonation and Authorship in Romantic Britain" has remained a touchstone analysis, but Richard Cronin's *Paper Pellets*, Jeffrey Cox's *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*, and David Stewart's *Romantic Magazine's and Metropolitan Literary Culture* feature sustained engagements with the attacks.

breeches and flesh-coloured stockings) and outlining how Hunt uses them inappropriately, “Z” portrays Hunt as a man who cannot grasp the social codes of the class to which he aspires. Hunt’s failure to wear the right clothes on the right occasions *stands in* for his failure to understand the rules of poetry: he is overdressed, and this is the surest proof that his verse is, too. In depicting Hunt’s attire, meanwhile, “Z” shows off his own ease of literary description. The vividness with which the arriviste dandy is described, down to the false luxury of his artificial rosebud, damns Hunt by comparison. Readers are invited to read and admire the reviewer’s satirical description, rather than Hunt’s poetry.

Almost a year later, a similar relationship between author and work appears in the fourth Cockney School attack, targeting John Keats:

It is a far better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop Mr. John [Keats], back to “plaster, pills, and ointment boxes,” &c. But, for Heaven’s sake, young Sangrado, be a little more sparing of extenuatives and soporifics in your practice than you have been in your poetry. (*BEM* 3:17 [August 1818] 524)

Here, again, the author’s non-literary behavior (the “personality”) serves to represent his poetry. Hurrying Keats back to his apothecary’s shop, “Z” rereads the poems not as poetry, but as sedatives. He counsels Keats to be wary of duplicating his performance in poetry in his professional capacity—overdosing his clients may have more dangerous consequences than overdosing his readers. The personal information of Keats’ employment is invoked not only as class-based exclusion; it also provides the governing *image* by which to represent and dismiss his poetry. But unlike the allegedly stultifying effects of reading Keats, the attack itself sparkles with life. Alluding to young Sangrado, an inept physician in Le Sage’s novel *Gil Blas*, translated into English by Tobias Smollett, “Z” not only suggests that Keats is a quack, as James Allard has noted (96), but demonstrates his own mastery of the satirical literary canon represented by

Smollett. “Z” shares a common, English literary culture with his readers in the form of the Sangrado joke—one that shuts out Keats and his unreadable, illiterate, pseudo-Greek *Endymion*.

Finally, the most economical and perhaps most perfect “personality” of the Cockney School appears in the versified table of contents for the March 1818 number of the magazine:

Of pimpled Hazlitt’s coxcomb lectures writing,
Our friend with moderate pleasure we peruse. (*BEM* 2:12 [March 1818] 613)

In “pimpled Hazlitt” the periodical offers a new, Homeric epithet to epitomize the poet’s character. Hazlitt’s pimpled skin itself upstages and represents his lectures. The mottled texture of the pimpled skin invokes the accusation of paradox had become the standard response to Hazlitt’s work, while its conjunction with the word “coxcomb” implies a syphilitic rash and thereby impugns the overall moral tendencies of his work.¹⁴ In each of these three instances, then, the synecdochic mode allows elements outside the text to be substituted for it: Hunt’s clothes for his poetic style, Keats’ drugs for his poem’s effects, Hazlitt’s pimples for his moral and political opinions. The “personality”, as an attack, depends on this basic contention: that it is more important and meaningful to attend to the person behind a text than to attend to the text itself. It insists, through its violence, vividness, and effectiveness, that what is personal about a text’s author constitutes its meaning. This may be, by many metrics, irresponsible criticism, but it partakes of the new representational logic of book reviewing and serves to advance the reviewer’s literary prowess over that of the targeted author. Ethical or not, such a mode of dealing with authors is important to the Romantic period and deserves deeper, and more systematic analysis.

One of the barriers to such analysis has been the terminological confusion that the term “personality” has caused. As Tom Mole has pointed out, usage of the term “personality” to mean

¹⁴ For Hazlitt’s love of paradox see reviews of his *Lectures on English Drama* (*ER* 34:67 [August 1820] 438) and on the *English Poets* (*QR* 19:38 [July 1818] 424).

a disparaging remark—rather than a characteristic of self or identity—dates to the mid-eighteenth century (2013, 89). It is in this sense that Coleridge deemed the Romantic period “this age of personality, this age of literary and political gossiping” in the *Biographia Literaria* (23). However, current critical discussions tend to muddy this meaning, allowing “personality” to pick up, and become overshadowed by, more modern valences of meaning. Peter Murphy astutely recognizes personality as a “genre” in his influential analysis of *Blackwood’s* Cockney School attacks, but he is also quick to point out a tempting slippage into other meanings (626). In describing the unique coloring of *Blackwood’s* and the *London Magazine*, Murphy notes that “The word “personal”, along with its linguistic relatives, is constantly applied to the practice of the [*Blackwood’s*] magazine” (631). In picking out an extract where “personality” is used to signify an inappropriate personal attack, Murphy makes a jump that will become characteristic of discussions of personality-as-attack¹⁵:

Much of the spirit of this extract concentrates in the word “personalities,” here used as a term for personal satire. “Personality,” as we know it, is another word for the self, the group of characteristics that identifies individuality, and so it is a delightful linguistic compression that also makes it a name for the unfeeling handling people receive from personal satire of the *Blackwood’s* type. (631)

Murphy’s delight in this parallel should not be allowed to engender confusion between personality-as-attack and our modern understanding of “personality” as individuality—whether we mean the sense of identity that affirms our sense of self or the set of behaviors for which reality-TV producers cast. To do so produces a hierarchy between the two, and threatens to render personality-as-attack invisible.

¹⁵ Here is the extract in question (in full) in which John Scott of the *London* describes the features of *Blackwood’s* that his own, newly-launched magazine will *not* be emulating: “Nor shall we seek to impart to our sheets that redolency of Leith-Ale, and tobacco smoke, which floats about all the pleasantries of the magazine in question,—giving one the idea of its facetious articles having been written on the slopped table of a tavern parlour in the back-wynd, after the *convives* have retired, and left the author to solitude, silence, pipe-ashes, and the dregs of *black-strap*. The indecency of personalities, and the unmanliness of retractions, we mean to respect as belonging to our Scotch friends:—also the pleasures of caning and being caned,—or cudgelling, and being cudgelled.” (quoted by Murphy, 631)

In Richard Cronin's recent intervention on the subject, the slippage between these two meanings gains momentum. When describing the post-Waterloo literary climate as one in which both personal attacks occurred and developed essayist personae emerged, he summarizes: "Personality was at once the most widely deprecated resource of those engaged in political and literary controversy and the most valued characteristic of [anonymous and pseudonymous] modern writing" (53). Such a framing feels very satisfying, but has obfuscating effects. It offers the positively-viewed, literary work of essayists like Lamb or Hazlitt as an offset to the debased practice of personal attack. In so doing, it both obscures the literary content of such attacks and refuses to interrogate their function in periodical culture. When Murphy invokes our modern ideas of personality as self, or Cronin our framing of personality as style, they produce a dialectical reading of the term: the modern meaning provides a means of redeeming the debased Romantic one. "Personality" as attack is reduced to the antithesis through which the redemptive modern sense of self or style can be produced. It is only worth mentioning as the hostile environment *despite which* the excellence of Romantic conceptions of selfhood must triumph. This doubled, dialectical presentation of the term produces characteristic confusion like that found in David Stewart's otherwise cogent chapter on "Urban, Hunt, North: Personality and the Principle of Miscellaneity", which, after one mention of *Blackwood's* "personalities" as "cutting", wields the term to signify inclusion of different personae and knitting them together in one magazine, even while drawing on contemporary sources that use the term in its sense of attack (2011, 39).¹⁶ The overall tendency to forsake the uncomfortable uses and meanings of

¹⁶ At the risk of nitpicking, I do want to drive home the extent to which being personal or "personality" means a particular kind of attack and repurposing it to mean something else introduces confusion. For example, a quotation from Lamb that describes why the *London* is a less successful magazine than *Blackwood's* should be read as indicating personality in its attacking sense: "[Wainewright] is much wanted. He was a genius of the Lond. Mag. The rest of us are single Essayists. ...He talked about it & about it. The Lond. Mag. wants the *personal note* too much. Blackwd. owes everything to it." (quoted by Stewart 2011, 30. my italics) By reading Lamb's comment as a critique of the magazine's failure to tie articles together through a set of different personas, Stewart ends up understating the importance of the

“personality” in order to celebrate its more literary applications leads at the limit to the framing of Kim Wheatley’s most recent book, *Romantic Feuds: Transcending the “Age of Personality”*, in which “personality” becomes something to “transcend” rather than a technique worthy of study in its own right.

Yet periodicals themselves, as well as indignant responses such as Coleridge’s, overwhelmingly define “personality” as the kind of attacks found in magazines, pamphlets and newspapers. Even as *Blackwood’s* plays with the term, it does not seek to redeem it—instead, extending the variety of attacks that “personality” might comprise. According to *Blackwood’s* “personality” can appear in acts of self-promotion as well as hostile reviews. Leigh Hunt, they explain, is guilty of writing personalities not only of others, but of himself:

he never yet published a single Number of the Examiner paper—a single sonnet or song—of which one half at least was not, in some shape or other, dedicated to himself. [...] We are sick of the *personalities* of this man—of his vituperative personalities concerning others, and his commendatory personalities concerning himself. (*BEM* 5:25 [April 1819] 98)

Such “commendatory personalities” are acts of self-revelation that shame the author as much as an attack would; in particular, Hunt’s revelations of his domestic habits in the *Examiner* and *The Round Table* are read, both here and elsewhere, and instances of personal attack. Hunt abandons decorum by publishing “the account of his getting the night-mare by eating veal-pye, [...] tak[ing] the trouble to inform us that he dislikes cats; to describe ‘the skilful spat of the finger nails which he gives his newspaper,’ and the mode in which he stirs his fire” (*QR* 17:33 [April 1817] 159). Hunt’s drive for self-exposure provides the reviewer all the ammunition required for future personalities; in a sense, he attacks himself.

hostile tone of *Blackwood’s* to its success. Wainewright’s persona “Janus Weathercock” was fond of personalities, even wielding them against other writers at the *London* (see Chapter 4 for further discussion).

But as violations of decorum, such self-personalities are also attacks on the reader: they reveal something personal about their object that should have been kept out of public knowledge. The accusation of vanity goes beyond a simple problem of self-obsession—this is an aggressive vanity, which prompts Hunt to put his person into print where it does not belong. “Personalities” in their usual form, always claim to respond to such a transgression. There is, in a sense, no outside of personality, as the attacker will always claim that the process had been initiated by its victim. Thus, Hunt’s publication is construed as an act of force against his readers. As a corrective to the impulse to collapse the Romantic sense of personality with more modern understandings, I will focus on personality as just such an act of force—an attack, or an imposition. It is in this sense that I will use the term in the coming pages. For the periodical writers of the Romantic period, personality is not an attribute of self but a technique through which one attacks or promotes a writing persona. As an utterance, it is like an obscenity: “it is scarcely possible to document [it]... without repeating the offense” (Cronin, 45). Personalities were composed of a similarly sticky substance: they are always reactivated by any attempt at rebuttal. In their interest and effectiveness, they proved the perfect technique for book reviewers struggling to respond to a market filled with more books than one can possibly buy or read. By reprinting, revealing, or inventing the private detail, periodical writers solve a perceived problem in their world—represented here by Hunt—the problem of the surplus author.

II: The Problem of the Surplus Author

There are many reasons for the popularity of personalities in the Romantic period. They entertained readers, boosted flagging sales, and were incredibly easy and fertile sources of copy. The problem with depending *only* on the sensational “Cockney School” attacks for a full account of personality is that they represent the peak of the personality-attack’s virulence, rather than its usual form. Critics like Tom Mole have found *Blackwood’s* dedication to personalities aberrant,

the mark of its “distinctive place among periodicals of the day” (2013, 92). Such statements have, I believe, overemphasized *Blackwood's* exceptional status among Romantic periodicals. On its own behalf, *Blackwood's* insisted on a genealogy of personalities that furnished a precedent for its own practice. In the “Familiar Epistles to Christopher North”, “John Bull” writes:

The new outcry against personalities, ought not only to make you the more explicit in manifesting your determination to adhere to the rule you have adopted, namely, to use against your adversaries *the weapons which they have themselves used*; and I therefore again take leave to reiterate what I urged in my last, namely, that you should shew the Whigs, from their own oracles and organs, that they have far exceeded, both in spite and venom, the utmost malice of your bitterest resentment, and, in many instances, without one allaying drop of your generous good humour; and also to remind the credulous public, whom the Whigs are so sedulously again trying to gull, that what is now called personality is a very ancient, perhaps an inveterate quality of all criticism. (*BEM* 10:56 [October 1821] 312, my italics)

Tracing a *Whig* policy of personalities back through *Edinburgh* reviewing and into the political newspapers and pamphlets of the eighteenth century, “John Bull” posits a British tradition of personality in political discussion. In so doing, he justifies *Blackwood's* use of the technique in its political approach to literature.

In my own investigation, *Blackwood's* deployment of personality is certainly the most playful and brash, but it is nevertheless the culmination of an approach to literature that was already set well in place by the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* Reviews. Despite the constant public declarations as to the “general conventions that outlawed personality from responsible public discourse” (Mole 2013, 90), reviewers in particular and periodicals in general were dependent on them from the inception of the new reviewing model in 1802. While the major quarterlies seem staid when compared with the literary experimentation of *Blackwood's*, they established the mode and meaning of personality that the later magazines would exploit so brilliantly. It is in understanding personalities as an extension of, rather than a divergence from, the book-reviewing mission that we can understand the true meaning of personalities in the Romantic period.

As I began to outline in the previous chapter, Romantic-period reviewers perceived an increase in the rate of book publication. To a large extent, this shift is real: As Michael Suarez has noted, statistics on the print explosion of the Romantic period have proved difficult to produce, but an analysis of the *ESTC* reveals a 42% increase in the number of titles per annum between 1783 and 1793 (44). Less comprehensive statistics compiled by William St Clair trace the steady increase in new titles across various genres into the nineteenth century (*Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, Appendix 7). The *Edinburgh Review* and its imitators responded to this publication explosion—perhaps surprisingly—with a new policy of selectivity, which, combined with a shift from monthly to quarterly publication, exacerbated the tension between reviewing space and print output. For book reviews and the magazines that grew out of them, personality provided a solution to the problem of surplus of *books*, by reframing it as a problem of a surplus of *authors*.

Reconfiguring the problem of surplus in this way has important consequences. Considered as a problem of books, the publication explosion of the first decades of the nineteenth century test human capacity itself: the number of published books challenges models of conceptualization, organization, and even reading ability. Isaac D'Israeli, a frequent reviewer for the *Quarterly Review*, explains in *The Curiosities of Literature*:

Lenglet de Fresnoy, one of the greatest readers, calculated that he could not read, with satisfaction, more than ten hours a day, and ten pages in folio an hour; which makes one hundred pages every day. Supposing each volume to contain one thousand pages, every month would amount to three volumes, which make thirty-six volumes in folio in the year. In fifty years a student could only read eighteen hundred volumes in folio. All this, too, supposing uninterrupted health, and an intelligence as rapid as the eyes of the laborious researcher. A man can hardly study to advantage till past twenty, and at fifty his eyes will be dimmed, and his head stuffed with much reading that should never be read. (35)

The limitations of human lifetime and physical capacity exacerbate the problem of selection—one wants to avoid stuffing one's head, but it is difficult to tell what should be read, or how. As a

problem of authors, however, the surplus of books becomes a surplus of people, and existing categories borrowed from moral or social registers now ready-to-hand to help with classification. Even more importantly, personalities provide a mode of analysis that circumvents the “reading that should never be read”. Before it reached its apogee in the *Blackwood’s* attacks that opened this chapter, personality served the crucial role of negotiating the problem of selection in the pages of the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Review*. It played directly into the dual innovations of post-*Edinburgh Review* reviewing—facilitating selection and affording plenty of opportunity to exploit the new acidic tone. It is, in fact, the most perfect conjunction of those two principles that arises out of the synecdochic reviewing method.

When included, a personality replaces or trumps two other important functions of book-reviewing in the period: the remediation of material and the analysis of its stylistic or argumentative merits. Even when personalities occur alongside a fair analysis of a book’s failings, they change the tone of the review and distract from any logical arguments deployed. Their sensationalism becomes the focal point of the reviews and essays in which they appear—they are what gets remembered, what gets quoted, and what the victims respond to if they do in fact respond.¹⁷ In so doing, it literally replaces the book in the review: the author’s personal information takes the place of the text that would be evaluated.

¹⁷ In fact, personality almost infects the responses and retorts that can be made to it. For instance, when the Rev. George Faber challenges his *Edinburgh* reviewer, he is forced to defend himself by revealing even more personal information in order to undermine the personalities. When they accuse him of not knowing his Herodotus, he responds: “This pitiful insinuation, worthy of the quarter whence it originates, will serve only to provoke a smile in the countenance of those, who know that it has been my fate to occupy the situation of a college tutor ten years of my life; in the course of which period, the very passage which the man charitably supposed I have never seen in the original, has been perused and reperused by me *at least a dozen times!*” (qtd, Ring 9). In order to refute, Faber must cement even further the relevance of personal details to the evaluation of his work. Tragically, we can imagine the *Edinburgh* striking back without missing a beat—twelve times! and he still can’t understand the text.... maybe he can’t read at all.... Another version of the infectious side of personality might be Hazlitt’s catalogue of the personal defects of the *Quarterly* reviewers in his *Letter to William Gifford*: “If, Sir, your friend, Mr. Hoppner... if even this artist, whom you celebrate as a painter of flattering likenesses, had undertaken to unite in one piece the

What personalities are not, however, is the random effect of personal grudges. An examination of the early years of the *Edinburgh Review* shows that attacking an author personally was not as arbitrary—or indeed, as personally motivated—an act as one might expect. As the preceding chapter argued, personality was only one of several reviewing strategies deployed by book reviewers. In fact, reviewing in the *Edinburgh* proceeds according to a system, based on assumptions about how likely a book is to actually be *read* by its own readers. Broadly, this system involved dividing works into those that would be read by the review’s audience and those that would not. If the assumption was that a book was of sufficient prominence, importance, or notoriety that it would be read, the review was devoted to analysis and discussion of the book’s information and the manner in which it was presented. Authors often complained their reviewers misrepresented their arguments through what Thelwall called the various “Jeffs”, but personalities are less common among such treatments. In many cases, such reviews required a less lively style than the reviewer would normally offer. As the reviewer of Clarkson’s *History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade* explained:

There are works of so much moral worth, that it would imply a deadness of feeling in the critic, if, in reviewing them, he did not abate some part of his wonted attention to the minutiae of style or arrangement. That which a deep sense of the importance of the subject had withheld from the author’s notice during the composition, should gain only a subordinate degree of attention from the reader. (*ER* 12:24 [July 1808] 355)

In cases of great importance, the reviewer is restrained by a sense of the higher order of arguments to which he must attend.

most striking features and characteristic expressions of his and your common friends, had improved your lurking archness of look into Mr. Murray’s gentle, downcast obliquity of vision; had joined Mr. Canning’s drooping nose to Mr. Croker’s aspiring chin, the clear complexion (the *splendida bilis*) of the one, to the candid self-complacent aspect of the other; had forced into the same preposterous medley, the invincible *hauteur* and satanic pride of Mr. Pitt’s physiognomy, with the dormant meaning and admirable nonchalance of Lord Castlereagh’s features, the manly sleekness of Charles Long, and the monumental outlines of John Kemble—what mortal would have owned the likeness!” (29).

According to the *Edinburgh's* principle of selection, the number of books that fell into this category was a fraction of the already small number of books that they reviewed. It is unreasonable, they imply, to expect that all books will be read and to assume that the audience desires this level of detail about them. As even critics of the *Edinburgh Review* acknowledged, the review was usually read *instead of* the books it contained: "A large portion of the people in this country, even those who have some partiality and taste for books," John Ring explains, "have recourse to the Reviewers for the sake of saving the expense of money and time, and of abridging their labour" (23). The *Edinburgh Review's* approach therefore produced two further categories: those books that contain something useful, informative, or good and those that do not. The first of these groups was then treated with some strategy of remediation. For example, a poorly written travel narrative is mined for the useful information about the state of France it contained, the information re-presented in paraphrase; or, a mediocre poem is excerpted in order to preserve its laudable passages.¹⁸ The second group, made up of those that do not deserve this praise, was subjected to satiric excerpting, parody, and personality. I categorize the *Edinburgh Review's* treatment of different books in this way in order to illustrate the deliberateness with which personality is deployed as a reviewing strategy: it is not appropriate in the discussion of the most prominent books, but rather in the margins, to deal with books that did not contain good extracts or useful information and would not be read at all. This residuum collects a set of surplus texts and understands them, through the means of personality, as being about the persons of their authors.

This substitution of the author for the book sheds new light on famous attacks like Francis Jeffrey's review of Wordsworth's *The Excursion*. This review has served both in the

¹⁸ For the former, see the review of Jacob's *Travels in Spain* (*ER* 18:35 [May 1811]). For the latter, see the review of James Hogg's *Queen's Wake* (*ER* 24:47 [November 1814]).

Romantic period and since as *the* exemplary instance of Jeffrey's unfairness to Wordsworth. As Jeffrey himself reflected on the occasion of the 1844 republication of his book reviews:

I have spoken in many places rather too bitterly and confidently of the faults of Mr. Wordsworth's poetry: And forgetting that, even on my own view of them, they were but faults of taste, or venial self-partiality, have sometimes visited them, I fear, with an asperity which should be reserved for objects of Moral reprobation. If I were now to deal with the whole question of his poetical merits, though my judgment might not be substantially different, I hope I should repress the greater part of these *vivacités* of expression. (233)

For Jeffrey, not merely the vitriol but the personality of the review is regrettable. He finds his "asperity" to have been mistakenly directed at petty faults rather than serious literary transgressions. Wordsworth's "venial self-partiality"—a fault we might connect with such solipsistic presentations of his poetry as the "Moods of my own Mind" sections in the 1807 *Poems*—serves as a provocation to personality.¹⁹ Wordsworth has already obtruded his person on his readers. With Wordsworth's venial partiality to, and tendency to represent, himself in mind, let us return to this most famous review.

Jeffrey applies the logic of personality, wherein the author's private behavior is the most interesting aspect of the text, taking Wordsworth's private self to be embodied by the poem's characters. For Jeffrey, Wordsworth's representation of the Pedlar in the poem is "perverted":

For, after he has thus wilfully debased his moral teacher [the Pedlar character] by a low occupation, is there one word that he puts in his mouth, or one sentiment of which he makes him the organ, that has the most remote reference to that occupation? Is there any thing in his learned, abstracted, and logical harangues, that savours of that calling that is ascribed to him? [...] A man who went about selling flannel and pocket-handkerchiefs in

¹⁹ Jeffrey objected to this section, as well: "It is possible enough, we allow, that the sight of a friend's garden-spade, or a sparrow's nest, or a man gathering leeches, might really have suggested to such a mind ["a mind of extraordinary sensibility, habituated to solitary meditation"] a train of powerful impressions and interesting reflections; but it is certain, that, to most minds, such associations will always appear forced, strained, and unnatural; and that the composition in which it is attempted to exhibit them, will always have the air of parody, or ludicrous and affected singularity" (*ER* 11:21 [October 1807] 218). Jeffrey finds Wordsworth overperforms his own individuality in earlier poetry, attempting to exaggerate the impression of his own brilliance through the selection of particularly unpromising subjects.

this lofty diction, would soon frighten away all his customers; and would infallibly pass either for a madman, or for some learned and affected gentleman, who, in a frolic, had taken up a character which he was peculiarly ill qualified for supporting. (*ER* 24:47 [November 1814] 30)

Jeffrey is purportedly offended by the Pedlar as a character inappropriate to the otherwise realistic poem in which he appears: his speech does not fit with his station in life. In order to express this offense, Jeffrey imagines the Pedlar as an actual person, discovering that only madness or affectation could explain his real existence. Yet, as he dilates on this ridiculous Pedlar and his imagined business failure, Jeffrey encourages an association between the Pedlar and the poet, whose language also prevents him from selling *his* wares. The slippage between Wordsworth himself and this “learned and affected gentleman” is simultaneously obvious and unactionable. Jeffrey never calls Wordsworth a madman, and yet; the perversion of the Pedlar lies in the implication that Wordsworth is walking around the Lake District trying to impersonate him.

The opening paragraphs of the review make such a connection plain. Jeffrey considers Wordsworth’s poetry a testament to his “long habits of seclusion” (*ER* 24:47 [November 1814] 3). Such isolation may give rise to surprising poetic images, but it cannot produce a well-regulated genius:

Solitary musings, amidst such scenes, might no doubt be expected to nurse up the mind to the majesty of poetical conception,—(though it is remarkable, that all the greater poets lived, or had lived, in the full current of society):—But the collision of equal minds,—the admonition of prevailing impressions—seems necessary to reduce its redundancies, and repress that tendency to extravagance or puerility, into which the self-indulgence and self-admiration of genius is so apt to be betrayed. (*ER* 24:47 [November 1814] 3)

Wordsworth’s social isolation is the very thing that unsuits him for his social role as a poet. He does not conform to the example set by other successful and productive poets and is instead betrayed into a solipsism that can be summed up by his rural milieu. Wordsworth’s desire to mix with his social inferiors is interpreted as an intellectual cowardice that causes him to flee from “equal minds”. As an author, he is just like the Pedlar: both fail to understand how they should

speak in order to sell their wares. While for the Pedlar this is a problem of handkerchiefs, for Wordsworth it lies in his failure to grasp that British readers do not want poems in simple country diction.²⁰ This ignorance is produced by Wordsworth's real social isolation; for Jeffrey, he is the real-world version of his protagonist, a "learned and affected gentleman" or a "madman". The vehicle of personality serves here to prove that it is not so much *The Excursion*, but Wordsworth himself that "will never do!"

As Wordsworth's example demonstrates, the basic premise of reviewing-by-personality is that the author of the book is more important off the page than on it, that they have more impact in their private and social actions than the content of their never-to-be-read books. Wordsworth's book can be damned by the Reviews and bought by no one, and his continued ability to perform the role of the "affected gentleman"-author remains upsetting. Personality encodes a suspicion of authors as social subjects. The personal life of the author—even absent the more scandalous transgressions of to a Byron or a Shelley—seems to suggest something aberrant in the act of authorship. This fundamental suspiciousness of the author is confirmed in cases where the very unreadability of a book provides testimony to the fact that the author is a *good* subject. In a July 1813 review of Thomas Clarkson's *Life of William Penn*, the *Edinburgh Review* constructs just this species of personality—the clergyman Clarkson's good moral character is what makes him an unsuccessful writer:

It is impossible to look into any of Mr. Clarkson's books, without feeling that he is an excellent man—and a very bad writer. Many of the defects of his composition, indeed, seem to be directly referable to the amiableness of his disposition.—An earnestness for truth and virtue, that does not allow him to waste any thought on the ornaments by which they may be recommended—and a simplicity of character which is not aware that what is substantially respectable may be made dull or ridiculous by the manner in which it is

²⁰ It is worth noting that in making this personality linking the Pedlar and Wordsworth, Jeffrey reinvokes his original complaints against the *Lyrical Ballads* in his October 1802 review of Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (ER 1:1 [October 1802]).

presented—are virtues which we suspect not to have been very favourable to his reputation as an author. [...] Unfortunately for Mr. Clarkson, moral qualities alone will not make a good writer; nor are they even of the first importance on such an occasion: And accordingly, with all his philanthropy, piety, and inflexible honesty, he has not escaped the sin of tediousness,—and that to a degree that must render him almost illegible to any but Quakers, Reviewers, and others, who make public profession of patience insurmountable. (*ER* 21:42 [July 1813] 444-5)

Functioning by backhanded compliment, this personality reveals the author's tolerance, patience, and upright morality as guarantors of the book's dullness. The value of the book is inversely proportional to the moral worth of the author. Mr. Clarkson is taken to be a good private citizen and positive representative of his ecclesiastical profession. And, because his poor book will be ignored by all but those few paragons of patience, the reviewers, its quality does not need to be discussed at length. Unlike Wordsworth, Clarkson does not present this kind of self-aware performance of authorship to which the reviewer objects. Instead, his book is a positive sign: the reviewer can happily read it as evidence of continued admirable behavior among simple men like Mr. Clarkson.

By using personality to present a book as unreadable or unworthy of reading, book reviewers demarcate acceptable modes of publishing behavior, policing the performance of authorship. They respond to a surplus of publications by representing it as a surplus of authors; insisting that most authors are more influential as private citizens than as public voices. These authors do not need to be read, or rather, *their books* do not need to be. Personality provides the vehicle to read the authors themselves more efficiently. Reuniting disparate publications under the name of their author provides a way of grouping and organizing texts that can now be reviewed collectively. The substitution of authors for books serves to consolidate the print culture in a way that facilitates the book reviewing project.

III: Controlling the Authorship Drive

Personalities serve to punish surplus authors, but this was evidently not the only possible solution to such a problem. Why did reviewers not simply punish these unworthy aspirants to authorship with neglect? Why indeed, was surplus authorship identified as a problem by this particular periodical culture at this historical moment? Reviewers would protest that the precedent was set for them, that they only attacked authors like Wordsworth or Hunt, who had already forced their personality into the public eye. *Blackwood's*, for instance, worked especially hard to convince its readers of the hypocrisy of its targets, dredging up earlier personal attacks they had committed, or even claiming that no personalities had occurred since they had “no personal acquaintance” with those wronged (Mole 2013, 94). But beneath this protestation lies a concerns with the *example* set by authorship. Reviewers focused their personal attacks on certain categories of author: women, clergymen, young idle nobility, and various stripes of the middle and working classes. Authorship, reviewers feared, was becoming a universal desire—with disastrous consequences for the public sphere.

The *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Review* were quick to identify a trend to self-promotion in the work of these aspirants to authorship. Whether it was the grasping of a lower-class writer or the vanity of a young noble one, reviewers pushed back against books that they interpreted as announcing something private about the author—sexual desirability, for instance, as seen in the following two examples. The *Edinburgh Review*, discussing Lord Viscount Strangford's translation of Luis de Camoens' poems, objects to Strangford's tendency to interpolate his own material into the translation. Interpolating such flourishes is even more problematic than translating morally-suspect content from the original, the review insists, because it shows that Strangford has not been sufficiently constrained by the “duty of the translator”:

[T]he practice which he has frequently adopted, of writing a page or two upon what, in the original, is comprised in three or four lines, affords him free scope for indulging this propensity. [...] It would, indeed, be difficult to select any piece to which some addition has not been made in this taste by the translator; and though he has sometimes improved upon his original, he has likewise frequently corrupted the purity or simplicity of his composition, by his own inordinate passion for unseasonable embellishment. (*ER* 6:11 [April 1805] 46-7)

The issue here is less morality and more the personal passions of the author; his taste for a particular kind of embellishment intrudes on his editorial task. But this is not all: personal passion is a problem of the person of the *author*. By obtruding his physiognomy into the translation, the young author treats the book as a sort of personal ad:

we must inform the readers that the canzon, as well as the note in question, appear to have been written for the express purpose of conveying to the world the very interesting particulars which they contain with regard to the noble *author*; there not being found in the original, from which it professes to be drawn, any mention whatever of blue eyes, auburn hair, young freshness, amorous disposition, or any other of those advantages which the noble writer either possesses, or think he has the prospect of possessing over the rest of the world. (*ER* 6:11 [April 1805] 50, my italics)

The reviewer only refers to this translator as an author in reference to a project of *self*-publication. Strangford is accused of using the translation of these poems to advertise (publish) his own good looks and qualifications to the world. The reviewer names this intention explicitly, calling the publication a vehicle to promote the author's amorous success: "Lord Strangford informs us, that this book was the amusement of a *young* mind, [...] and time, it is to be hoped, will make some change in his opinions; If not, woe be to our fair countrywomen" (*ER* 6:11 [April 1805] 49). Lord Strangford's version of authorship thus constitutes a dangerous pattern of behavior. His inability to understand the duties of the translator, exemplified by his introduction of personal attributes and passions, indicates a more general desire to ignore other social duties, such as the proper treatment of women. This set of behaviors is what gets named as *authorial*. The practice of acting like an author figures in this review as an aberrant behavior. Too many authors like

Strangford would mean too many people using print for such purposes of personal promotion, subverting the very meaning of publication.

This obsession with self-promotion leads to a suspicious reading of books that are much further removed from a vanity publication like Strangford's. In particularly virulent April 1814 review of *The Wanderer's* established author Fanny Burney—recently become Mrs. D'Arblay—the *Quarterly* seizes on the event of Burney's marriage to insist that she has aged out of authorship. Arguing that marriage—for a woman—constitutes the end of her plotline, the reviewer finds that Burney has exhausted both her social and authorial value. Her latest book is a function of that exhaustion. Pretending not to recognize her by her married name, the reviewer presents a hypothetical review in which *The Wanderer* was not written by the author of *Cecilia*:

If we had not been assured in the title-page that this work has been produced by the same pen as *Cecilia*, we should have pronounced Madame D'Arblay to be a feeble imitator of the style and manner of Miss Burney—we should have admitted the flat fidelity of her copy, but we should have lamented the total want of vigour, vivacity, and originality. [...] Such being the opinion which we should have felt ourselves obliged to pronounce on an imitator, it follows that we have a still more severe judgment to pass on Madame D'Arblay herself. We are afraid that she is self-convicted of being what the painters technically call a *mannerist*; [...] but the *Wanderer* is not only the work of a mannerist, but of a mannerist who is *épuisée*, whose last manner is the worst, and who convinces us that, during the thirty years which have elapsed since the publication of *Cecilia*, she has been gradually descending from the elevation which the vigour of her youth had attained. (QR 11:21 [April 1814] 124)

In this narrative, the exhausted female author is collapsed with the derivative nature of her novel. Burney's choice to remove herself from the marriage market represents the exhaustion of her social exchange value, and therefore the exhaustion of any authorial value as well. Invoking one of Burney's young female protagonists, the reviewer becomes even more explicit:

The *Wanderer* has the identical features of *Evelina*—but of *Evelina* grown old; the vivacity, the bloom, the elegance, 'the purple light of love' are vanished; the eyes are there, but they are dim; the cheek, but it is furrowed; the lips, but they are withered. And when to this description we add that Madame D'Arblay endeavours to make up for the want of originality in her characters by the most absurd mysteries, the most extravagant incidents, and the most violent events, we have completed the portrait of an old coquette

who endeavours, by the wild tawdriness and laborious gaiety of her attire, to compensate for the loss of the natural charms of freshness, novelty, and youth. (*QR* 11:21 [April 1814] 126)

By capitalizing on Burney's name change, the reviewer represents her as a faded coquette; in this formulation, her authorial desirability is a derivative of her sexual desirability. Much like the earlier revelation that Della Crusca's Anna Mathilda is old and unattractive; the revelation of the female body serves as a means to rob the text of its authority. Burney is only interesting as an author so long as there is a *personal* narrative to unfold, and her marriage both ends her personal plotline and damns her work. At the limit, Burney's novels are a way to advertise her desirability—and now that she is married the novels can have no social purpose. Through them she is seeking attention that she no longer needs or deserves.

The surplus, self-promoting author does not merely produce a distracting flood of works, authors like Strangford or Burney also set a dangerous precedent: their very existence is liable to prompt the imitation of others. Reviewers are haunted by this threat of readerly imitation. For instance, in a January 1807 review of Montgomery's *Poems*, the *Edinburgh* attacks the author not for his own behaviors, but for the bad example his book sets. The review takes especial exception to the poems as a *third* edition. A first edition might be regarded as the production of "some slender youth of seventeen, intoxicated with weak tea, and the praises of sentimental Ensigns and other provincial literati", but the book's republication is much more problematic (*ER* 9:18 [January 1807] 347). Once again, the reviewer invokes a hypothetical case that would permit a kinder evaluation: if this book were only a first edition, the reviewer would be comfortable displaying great equanimity about its brief popularity. Its readers, like most poetry-readers, are not a well-informed group: "The truth is, however, that the diligent readers of poetry, in this country, are by no means instructed. They consist chiefly of young, half-educated women, sickly tradesmen, and enamoured apprentices. To such persons the faculty of composing rhyme always

appears little less than miraculous...” (*ER* 9:18 [January 1807] 348). Despite their ignorance, this group poses little threat. The fame promised by this audience, the reviewer explains, is “perishable”:

The girls grow up into women, and occupy themselves in suckling their children, or scolding their servants; the tradesmen into drinking, or to honest industry; and the lovers, when metamorphosed into husbands lay aside their poetical favourites, with their thin shoes and perfumed handkerchiefs. All of them grow ashamed of their admiration in a reasonably short time; and no more think of imposing the taste, than the dress of their youth, upon a succeeding generation. (*ER* 9:18 [January 1807] 348)

This audience will not provide the author with a life-long readership; instead, they consume his poetry for a brief and defined transitional period in their lives. Perhaps more importantly, their time as readers does not appear to materially affect them. Unlike the author, the readers mature, moving on from their youthful follies into their prescribed roles as husbands and wives. And while some turn out better and some turn out worse, they all progress along the set of narratives available to people of their class. Montgomery’s development, on the other hand, has been arrested—represented most strikingly by the republication of the same volume of silly youthful poems. Time is passing, but Montgomery is still drunk on the admiration of “sentimental Ensigns” and “provincial literati”. The *Edinburgh Review* refuses to muster the narrative of readerly imitation and moral corruption that is invited by this look at Montgomery’s unsophisticated readers. Instead, it portrays his experience of authorship as the true moral threat.

It is Montgomery’s example as an *author* that may provoke a dangerous spate of imitation: “It is hard to say what numbers of ingenuous youth may be lead to expose themselves in public, by the success of this performance, of what addition may be made in a few months to that great sinking fund of bad taste, which is daily wearing down the debt which we have so long owed the classical writers of antiquity” (*ER* 9:18 [January 1807] 347). Publication, troped here as

public exposure, is the primary threat of such a collection of poems. This problematic pattern of imitation gets reasserted in a review of Mant's *Poems*:

To write smooth verses is a very innocent amusement for a man of leisure and education,—and to read in manuscript to his family, or intimate associates is also a very venial and amiable indulgence of vanity;—but to push them out into the wide world, is not altogether so safe or laudable a speculation; and, though we are happy to tell him, that we think his talents respectable, yet we feel it a duty to announce to him, that we have not been able to discern in his works any of the tokens of immortality; and to caution him not to put himself in the way of unmerciful critics. (*ER* 9:18 [January 1807] 17)

Publication moves the poems from the circle of family and friend appreciation into the public sphere, and the critic as gatekeeper has a duty to caution the respectable-but-not-overly-talented from crossing over into that domain. Rather than being threatened by the mass literacy of the women, tradesmen, and apprentices, the reviewer focusses on a contagious pattern of publication. While we might more readily think of the democratization of readership that occurred in the Romantic period. (St Clair, 138), the concerns of the *Edinburgh Review* were much more devoted to the democratization of *authorship* among even the middle and upper classes.

The *Edinburgh Review* was not alone in its use of personalities to critique democratizing, potentially universal authorship. Its rival publication, the Tory *Quarterly Review*, approached the same issue through an interrogation of the disordered communities, families, and coteries that encourage its spread. The trope of the well-intentioned but injudicious friend is favorite for this periodical. In their oft-rehearsed scenario of problematic publication, friends cause material otherwise privately circulated to be published, either by encouraging authors, or by collecting and editing their material after death. The November 1809 number features both versions of this concern. In a review of Bowles's *Poems*, the reviewer laments the cobbled-together quality of the book: "Upon leaving off trade, why did Mr. Bowles think it necessary to regale us with the sweepings of his literary shopboard?—Many authors have been misled by a certain degree of success, and the by the ill-judged flattery of friends; we must sincerely regret that Mr. Bowles

should be found amongst the number” (*QR* 2:4 [November 1809] 287). Taking on the pose of the interested acquaintance or older family member, the reviewer laments the bad company the author has got into, ascribing its enthusiasm and poor judgment the responsibility for the ill-advised publication. A review of Florian’s *William Tell*, meanwhile, displays the posthumous version of this problem:

For the posthumous degeneracy of which we complain it is not difficult to account. The vanity of an author has its bounds. To deny to the world the happy product of the hour of inspiration, or the well-digested labours of a life of industry, he would indeed feel to be inhuman; nay, he would think it rigorous perhaps to with-hold even the every-day achievements of his pen, in which, though inferior, the hand of so great a master is observable: still, however, there is a certain portion of the contents of his portfolio, which, though he feel himself unable to commit it to the flames, he thinks may be retained in manuscript without any serious detriment to the interests of literature. But there are no limits to the blind partiality of an injudicious admirer, or to the experimental hardihood of a speculating bookseller. The folly of the one, or the impudence of the other, drags to light what the modesty of the author had endeavoured to conceal. (*QR* 2:4 [November 1809] 350)

Here, the reviewer probes the limits of authorial work in much the same manner as Foucault does in “What is an Author?”: “Assuming we are dealing with an author, is everything he wrote and said, everything he left behind, to be included in his work? [...] Certainly everything must be published, but can we agree on what “everything” means? [...] What if, in a notebook filled with aphorisms, we find a reference, a reminder of an appointment, an address, or a laundry bill, should this be included in his works? Why not?” (1624-5). Florian’s well intentioned family editors are asked to consider the same problem by the *Quarterly Review*. The reviewer baulks at their inclusiveness, sacrificing the reputation of the author to their folly, indulgence, or financial speculation. For the *Quarterly*, this kind of publication is especially pernicious because it leads to the publication of materials by those who are not “professed writers” (*QR* 9:18 [July 1813] 313). By identifying friend groups and coteries as the push behind democratized authorship, the *Quarterly Review* helps to justify its reliance on personalities. Authorship—whether living or posthumous—represents social disorder. Through personalities, then, the social beings of authors

circulate in place of their books, and the representation of their social circles replaces the intertextual conversations of the contents.

Implicit in this fear of new books by people who are not “professed writers” is a suspicion that authorship is not merely a temptation, a sign of bad behaviour, or a function of arrested development, but rather an essential part of how one imagines oneself as a person. Calling up echoes of Malthus, an October 1811 review of Churton’s *Works of Rev. Dr. T. Townson* laments the trend of clergymen publishing their sermons. Publishing in this way disrespects the public’s time; the author is placing his own parental feelings toward his work above public good: “let the modern theologian reverence the public as a great personage, who has many other avocations, and upon whom he can have no demand but for a moderate portion of time and attention; let him moreover suspect the *parental fondness of authorship*, and if, on mature examination, he have no important discovery to produce [...] let him forego his purpose, and prudently confine his papers to his own cabinet” (*QR* 6:11 [October 1811] 99, my italics). This “parental fondness for authorship” casts in Malthusian terms a kind of authorship drive that threatens the reading public. That is to say that, here, the reviewer imagines a drive to publish that mirrors the dangerous reproductive drive—the “passion between the sexes”—of Malthus’ *Essay on the Principle of Population* (4). Like the physical passion that results in reproduction and produces too many mouths for the world’s available food, the “parental fondness of authorship” produces exponential numbers of books, and outstrips the number of readerly eyes.

The reading public is at risk of being overwhelmed by the output of this massive drive: since one author can produce countless publications, the number of books to read will geometrically outstrip the number of people who are available to read them. The new, post-*Edinburgh* reviewing policy of selectiveness was perfectly calculated to emphasize, even exacerbate, this threat. As Michael Gamer has established for the novel, the post-*Edinburgh*

reviewing culture was marked by a precipitous drop in the percentage of works that were reviewed. Thus, between 1800-02, 71% of novels were reviewed, whereas between 1810-12 only 40% received any attention (Gamer 2015, 539). In quantitative terms, the selective reviewing model drew attention to the surplus of books, producing an additional scarcity of (critical) readers.²¹ To pursue this analogy further: the surplus author, who threatens the equilibrium of the public sphere, will have to be put down by “misery and vice” in the same manner as Malthus feels surplus population must be. But in the literary case, that very misery becomes the work of the periodicals to dole out. As Malthus counsels, they withhold their charity, offering instead antagonistic personalities as the requisite misery.²² But perhaps most importantly, viewing the drive to authorship as analogous to the “passion between the sexes” naturalizes and universalizes

²¹ An additional policy of the *Edinburgh*’s exacerbated this problem: the review insisted on the fact that all printing constituted publication, refusing to treat books that were printed for private circulation or published by subscription as outside of the public sphere. For example, consider John Thelwall’s outrage that they reviewed a book he considered unpublished: “they even dragged into their “Critical Journal” a work which no other Reviewer would have thought himself at liberty to notice: a work that has never been regularly announced in the London papers; and which, in its present form, it was not the intention of the author ever to have so announced. It had been printed, in compliance with the solicitation of some friends, who were desirous of an opportunity of serving me; and the obscure neighbourhood in which I then resided had not furnished me with those advantages of paper and typography, which the taste of the times required. The general publication was, therefore, deferred till occasion should call for, and leisure should permit, a new and more elegant impression: and all the publicity that was given to the book, was an occasional notice at the bottom of the advertisements of my lectures, in the provincial towns that I visited” (vii). Expanding the field of texts that can be considered as published and deserving of review may seem paradoxical given the anxiety about the explosion of print, but it allows the *Edinburgh* to regularize the difference between published and unpublished, as printed or unprinted—and, with the author serving as one node around which to gather texts, these printed works are all put on equal footing.

²² The defense that the nastiness of periodical criticism is necessarily is not an uncommon one to encounter—with varying degrees of serious. One version of this defense cites that poets have lost a certain amount of their characteristic irritability and have given over to puffing each other’s work. The *Edinburgh* reviewers feel the need to make up the difference. In a September 1816 review of Coleridge’s *Christabel* they are disinclined to take seriously Byron’s endorsement of the poem: “Moreover, we are a little inclined to doubt the value of the praise which one poet lends another. It seems now-a-days to be the practice of that once irritable race to laud each other without bounds; and one can hardly avoid suspecting, that what is thus lavishly advanced may be laid out with a view to being repaid with interest” (*ER* 27:53 [September 1816] 58-9). The commercial element of the poetic coterie undermines the tone of the public sphere and the reviewer has to be nasty in order to take up the slack.

it: any real or complete person will want to be an author. Authorship has ceased to be an exceptional case and now holds a place in the general narrative of personal development.

With an increasing richness of imagery, both quarterlies engage with the idea of a society composed entirely of authors. For the *Quarterly* as well as the *Edinburgh*, the spread of authorship provides and site of both nightmare and fantasy.²³ Democratized, potentially universal authorship serves at once as dystopian future and emblematic national portrait:

Mercier, in his year 2440, represents it as the perfection of human society for every man to be an author; and describes the citizens of his imaginary commonwealth, as accompanying their will with a legacy of the precepts to posterity or at least with an handsome anthology of rhimes. This paradise of printers, we are proud to think, is already pretty nearly realized in this happy country. The usurpation of literary rank is become so very universal, that it will shortly be as uncommon not to have written a book, as not to have been taught to write. Not a merchant's clerk now-a-days can cross the seas as supercargo, or exchange his Birmingham razors for silver shaving-basins at Buenos Ayres, but he must print, under the name of a voyage, his captain's log-book, and his own accounts of sales, in order to add the wages of authorship to the profits of his venture. (*ER* 12:24 [July 1808] 410-1)

While for Mercier this might be a sort of utopia, for the *Edinburgh* reviewer it is quite the opposite. The reviewer represents authorship becoming as normalized as writing, collapsing the idea of a fully literate public with a universally published one. Contemporary methods commonly referred to as “bookmaking”—for example, the publication of commercial travellers’ letters, or manufacturing of histories out of strings of excerpts—contribute to this expansion of authorship: Any life experience, no matter how mundane, comes to justify publication, and books can be assembled from fragments with the merest amount of effort or reflection and “unless something can be done to restore the ancient distinction of ranks and subdivisions of labour, we foresee

²³ The fact that, for the major quarterlies, the spread of authorship raises such concerns seems almost hypocritical. It is, of course, under the corporate voice of those periodicals that many professionals would turn to publication as a sideline income—becoming some version of the “miss-begotten monster, of equivocal race, half *Advocate* and half *Reviewer*” to which John Thelwall objected (Thelwall, 64). However, the threat of a spread of authorship goes beyond mere publication to the set of behaviors and beliefs that democratized authorship represents for these periodicals: exposure, and the constitution of self through such exposure.

nothing but the most dreadful of confusion, and the most ruinous dissensions in the great commonwealth of letters” (*ER* 8:16 [July 1806] 284-5). The eventual universal publication that will result from this trend, reviewers contend, will irreparably offset the balance between the number of readers and the number of authors.

This idea of balance persists across individual reviews and periodicals. In an August 1811 review of Henry Weber’s edition of the *Dramatic Works of John Ford*, the seventeenth century provides the field for an imagined utopia of readers—where the number of authors in comparatively few:

Both readers and authors were comparatively few in number. The former were infinitely less critical than they have since become; and the latter, if they were not less solicitous about fame, were at least much less jealous and timid as to the hazards which attended its pursuit. Men, indeed, seldom took to writing in those days, unless they had a great deal of matter to communicate; and neither imagined they could make a reputation, by delivering commonplaces in an elegant manner, or that the substantial value of their sentiments would be disregarded for a little rudeness or negligence in finishing. They were habituated, therefore, both to depend on their own resources, and to draw upon them without fear or anxiety; and followed the dictates of their own taste and judgment, without standing in awe of the antients, of their readers, or of each other. (*ER* 18:36 [August 1811] 277)

This reviewer’s vision centers on a prior historical moment when writers constituted a minority of literate people. In this idealized past, those who publish are motivated by a true need to communicate, rather than the desire to promote their own reputation. Authors can approach publication from a position of confidence rather than ambition or defensiveness. For the reviewer, this ideal authorial stance is dependent on proportionally small number of authors. At the core of such nostalgia, then, is a population of the unpublishing literate, who would provide a public for books without wanting to produce them. At such a time, as Southey wrote elsewhere, “every man had his place in society, and none of the ways of life were *crowded*” (*QR* 16:32 [January 1817] 537-8, my emphasis).

In searching for proof of the existence of a literate public that does not feel the need to publish, reviewers returned to personalities, finding in certain books the traces of proper, private reading behavior. It is in this mode that the *Quarterly* reviewed the *Diary of a Lover of Literature* as representative of other, never-to-be-published works. The reviewer explains: “One of the pleasantest associations which accompanies the volume now under review, is the contemplation of a leisure so successfully spent in the acquisition of useful knowledge, and the pursuit of elegant studies. We trust that the example is by no means singular, and that there are many more journalists than journals, many more readers than choose to give the world such a proof of the employment of their time” (*QR* 4:7 [August 1810] 164-5). In celebrating the book as a symbol of an unpublished private collection of books, the reviewer indulges in the fantasy of a reading public that does not aspire to authorship. It insists on the value of an intellectual engagement with books that fulfills itself through private exercise. True readership does not need to publish in order to prove it exists.²⁴

IV: Driving to Distraction

Personalities contend that authors are more important off the page than on it. They offer the interest and entertainment of discovering an author’s private life in place of dubiously

²⁴ Such unpublished writing serves an important social role in the Tory *Quarterly*, for which an allegiance and sympathy with landed interest leads it to be suspicious of city finance and critical of the tendency of gentry to spend the season in London. As is explained in the review of Sir R. Colt Hoare’s *Ancient Wiltshire* of February 1811, the pursuit of private research and writing offers an important occupation for gentry in the country, keeping them busy with something that ties them to place and does not waste a lot of money: “It is one of the advantages of belonging to the present day, that men of rank and fortune have many objects, unknown in ruder times, to wean them, not only from sensual gratification, but also from amusements, not perhaps actually criminal, yet gross and inelegant. Duties there always were in that rank, as in every other, to be fulfilled; but the demands of duty are never unremitted: and when the peer or opulent commoner has discharged all he owed to his country in parliament, or on the bench, and all what was due to his family or dependents at home, many irksome voids would remain which could scarcely be filled up but by the pleasures of the chase and table” (*QR* 5:9 [February 1811] 111). Such an occupation does not hinge on publication – writing, without authorship, offers an important release as a use of leisure time in order to maintain a social fabric that is unstable because of its lack of occupation.

entertaining information about a book's contents. The Cockney School attacks displayed how reviewers used personality to compete with the author reviewed—deploying literary language more expertly and certainly more comically than the book-author was shown to do. In so doing, personalities not only made the reviewer's work more efficient, but offered the audience a new reading game. They produced what Kevin Gilmartin has called a “hermeneutically active reading audience”, one that collaborates to construct the periodical's meaning out of its unstable tone (144). Gilmartin expresses some surprise at a periodical as “antidemocratic” as *Blackwood's* cultivating such an audience; but, as the following will show, such active reading provides a replacement for the publishing activity of which Tories and Whigs alike were so skeptical. Reviewers challenged the idea that their audience was put at moral risk by reading about the personal failings and misadventures of authors. Rather than espousing a view in which bad behavior threatens to provoke imitation, reviewers offered in the form of personalities a new, absorbing reading process of decoding and entertainment.

According to both the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, the idea of didactic literature—in which the deeds of virtuous or the punishment of the wayward is recounted in order to influence the behavior of the audience—depends on the naïve idea that people are apt to imitate the contents of what they read. The *Quarterly Review*, for instance, contends that a reader's pleasure and admiration for a poetic work indisposes them to moral analysis. A review of Mary Tighe's *Psyche*, advances the theory:

[U]ndoubtedly, it still remains a question whether the poetic interest produced by an allegorical composition has the effect of conciliating us to the moral lesson deposited beneath; nor does it furnish any answer to say that, after we have ceased to be interested by the composition as a narrative or poem, we are at leisure to profit by it as a discourse on ethics. Even this remark, however, is less than the truth. The admiration inspired by the perusal of such a work, will generally remain in sufficient strength to indispose the mind for the business of torturing it by analysis. (*QR* 5:10 [May 1811] 473)

Here, the reviewer contends that well-constructed literary work will produce too much enjoyment to be morally instructive. The mind is exhausted by enjoyment, leaving little possibility of its profiting from the underlying moral message. To parse the text's message, the reviewer assures us, will be like "dissect[ing] an eye with a pick-axe" (*QR* 5:10 [May 1811] 473). The concept of the didactic in literature is based on a misunderstanding of the dampening effects of admiration on the capacity for analysis.

The *Edinburgh* dismissed the goal of didactic drama from a similar vantage point in an April 1803 review of Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions*. Although didactic in form, the reviewer insist, these plays are unlikely to provoke any kind of imitation in their audience, whether in the positive sense of imitating good characters, or in the negative sense of not being dissuaded from bad actions by their represented punishments. The reviewer begins by recapitulating a standard claim about imitative effects of literature: "The display of great passions is apt to excite an admiration which is not always extinguished by a fictitious view of their tragical effects; and the exhibition of interesting occurrences sometimes begets a disgust and contempt for the insipidity of ordinary life" (*ER* 1:4 [July 1803] 275). Plays are threatening to society, this anti-theatrical argument runs, because they give the lower orders a taste for grand and destructive passions. The play's audience is moved to admiration of certain passions despite the moralizing resolution at the end of the play and is moved to find their own lives, absent of such passions, diminished by comparison—the unspoken implication being that they will seek to shake up their lives by a little passion of their own. However, the reviewer professes himself "skeptical" about the reality of this moral effect:

There is something of cant, however, in this also. Plays have, for the most part, no effect at all: they are seen or read for amusement and curiosity only; and the study of them forms so small a part of the occupation of any individual, that it is really altogether fantastical to ascribe them any sensible effect in the formation of his character. (*ER* 1:4 [July 1803] 275)

In order to undermine the hypothesis invoked above, the reviewer resituates literary texts within the context of a whole life-experience. He challenges the ability of one evening's entertainment to sour someone on their entire life and denies that amusement and admiration are so tightly connected with imitation. The reviewer contends that this cant misrepresents how we see or read—in actuality, enjoyment trumps all other interactions with the text. There is a kind of pure enjoyment that saps up all attention, “indisposing our minds” to analysis.

While psychological studies that evaluate the impact of flipping through contemporary women's magazines on self-esteem, for example, would challenge this idea of the blinding effects of total enjoyment on readerly reflection and feeling, the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Review* were devoted to advancing it. At first blush, this seems counter-intuitive. Personalities involved devoting a great deal of space to policing authorial behavior; they recapitulated the form of the didactic narrative, presenting the author as a case study to be avoided. As Richard Cronin has noted, biographies of the Romantic period assumed that “[t]he lives of writers [...] are, it seems, themselves exemplary texts of greater authority than any poem that they may have written” (46). Carrying this mode into the periodical through the medium of the personality, the reviewer altered the *tone* of this exemplarity: the author's life becomes a litmus test of the general direction of society, registering its quirks and ills. In so doing, the periodical transformed books of poems, for instance, which would usually reject the didactic mode, into examples of the genre. This transformation is a version of what Jason Camlot has called “generic transposition”: “the translation of the message of a text from one generic form to another” (153).²⁵ These didactic personalities constitute another kind of willful misreading practiced by book reviewers, realigning

²⁵ Camlot discussed this practice in the context of *Blackwood's Magazine*, tracking how provide prose elements such as critiques and letters in verse. As usual, we can extend Camlot's conclusions backwards, tracing how the magazine builds on earlier models; in this case, in the practice of personality already established in the decades where the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* ruled the periodical field.

the text's generic investments in order to facilitate a critique. This process of making an example out of authors seemingly contradicts the anti-didacticism evident the periodicals' argument about how reading or watching affects audiences. But for Romantic periodicals, the personality's didactic plotline was only the formal structure of an absorbing reading experience.

The theory of absorptive entertainment helps explain what personalities were in fact doing with the dangerous authorship drive. They offered an experience of reading that required and rewarded attention and effort on the part of the reader. Operating in the middle-space between figurative language and libelous attack, personalities required readerly collaboration to have effect. As David Minden Higgins underlines, the retreat into metaphor was a common excuse for periodical writers who were challenged about the personalities they had written—a metaphoric attack could dodge a charge of libel (59). In the *Quarterly Review's* attack on Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakspeare's Plays*, for instance, the language of personal abuse skates a careful line, deferred into the verb, rather than the noun or adjective: Hazlitt would have been beneath notice, were it not for the fact that

the creature, in his endeavours to crawl into the light, must take his way over the tombs of illustrious men, disfiguring the records of the greatness with the slime and filth which mark his track, it is right to point him out that he may be flung back to the situation in which nature designed him that he should grovel. (*QR* 18:36 [January 1818] 159)

The reviewer transforms Hazlitt's writing into slime smeared over the canon; his movement in reading through it is figured as crawling and groveling. This personality reasserts Hazlitt's class position by presenting this vivid image of his relationship to literary greatness; he must scrape and grovel in his reading even if he refuses to do so in his life.²⁶ The linguistic richness of the

²⁶ The trope of the scrambling writer is a favorite for the writers at the *Quarterly*. In an 1816 review of Leigh Hunt's *Story of Rimini* he described him similarly in critiquing his choice to dedicate to Byron: "we never, in so few lines, saw so many clear marks of the vulgar impatience of a low man, conscious and ashamed of his wretched vanity, and labouring, with coarse flippancy, to scramble over the bounds of birth and education, and fidget himself into the *stout-heartedness* of being familiar with a LORD" (*QR* 14:28 [January 1817] 481).

image of Hazlitt's writing thus threatens to supplant Hazlitt's own production, as the reviewer's description of him competes with the quotations from his book included in the review. As a literary device staying just on this side of the law, then, personality hinges on metaphor. It is one of the ways through which the periodical markets itself as interesting and the periodical writer draws the reader in with a literary ability of his own.

Personalities offer the reader and chance to reconstruct and assemble their charge, like the *roman à clef* inviting readers to decode its contents. By the time of the 1817 relaunch of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* under its new, more personal leadership of John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart, this mode of reading was well-developed. The most sensational article of the first issue, "Translation from an Ancient Chaldee Manuscript", offered precisely such an opportunity for readerly participation. Penned by Hogg with the help of Lockhart and Wilson in a pseudo-Biblical style that recalls especially the Book of Revelations, the article was famous not just for its sacrilegious style but for its wealth of personal allusions. Allegorizing the story of the magazine's founding into the history of a competition between the "man clothed in plain apparel [...] whose name was as it had been the colour of ebony" [William Blackwood] and the "man who was crafty in counsel, and cunning in all manner of working" [Archibald Constable], the Chaldee Manuscript enmeshed its readers in a surfeit of clues to its meaning (*BEM* 2:7 [October 1817] 89, 90). Some are easy to decode—the setting, which comprises "the Old City [...] which is on this side of the valley" and "the New City, which looketh towards the north", is easy to identify as Edinburgh (*BEM* 2:7 [October 1817] 91)—but other allusions depended on deeper insider knowledge. Those who knew the history of the periodical could quickly identify its original editors Thomas Pringle and James Cleghorn in the two "beasts" who originally present themselves to William Blackwood, offering him "a Book" in exchange for "a piece of money, that we may eat and drink that our souls may live", and John Wilson, author of the *Isle of the*

Palms, would have been recognizable in the “beautiful leopard from the valley of the palm trees” (*BEM* 2:7 [October 1817] 89). But other figures, such as the scorpion “which delighteth to sting the faces of men” only later, over successive iterations and responses become more firmly attached to J.G. Lockhart and his persona “Z”, responsible for the Cockney School attacks with which this chapter opened (Flynn, 27).

To engage with this kind of personality-laden writing, the reader is encouraged to pick apart its allusions and relate them to outside rumors and gossip. It is an intensive way of reading, one that encourages not so much analysis, as the search for a particular key to explain the joke. An Edinburgh lawyer, Robert Price Gillies, recounted how “copies of the original number were handed about with manuscript notes, identifying the principal characters” (quoted in Flynn, 28). As David Stewart has noted, allusions in *Blackwood’s* can function in several different ways: “recognizing an allusion can give pleasure, because it places one in a select group that “gets the point”,” regardless of whether the allusion is to an advertisement or a classical poem (2013, 115). However, not all of these jokes need to reach every reader. Stewart outlines how the joking discussion of local Edinburgh business is funny because “the joke is not the local references but the absurd nature of making local references in a broadly-circulated journal” (2011, 137) and indeed how “readers are [...] encouraged to track such fictions through the pages of the magazine. Such jokes might seem disconcerting to new readers, but that can itself become a source of humour to ‘constant readers’.” (2011, 144). *Blackwood’s* cultivates absorptive reading of precisely the type that the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* posited in their critique of didacticism. Personalities, despite their apparent didacticism, function as entertainment as much as example. By teaching their audience to read for this type of exposure, periodicals not only teach them to read suspiciously, but to see this suspicion as a kind of entertainment. By using personality to construct new and more interesting modes of reading and being in the know, by making reading

more absorbing and more complicated, reviewers furnish alternate amusement for the reader who might otherwise join the ranks of authors.

V: Unintended Consequences

The project of personality was a two-fold one: to expose the authorship drive to ridicule and to create a different way of reading problematic surplus texts. In employing personalities, periodicals offered their readers an absorbing reading project: the game of allusion and exposure is entrancing, as the current critical preoccupation with *Blackwood's* in particular has proved. Personality functioned dually as a diversion and dissuasion from the drive for authorial self-exposure: that is to say, that its violence warned readers off from becoming authors themselves, while the reading game itself provided an enjoyable distraction. It also, however, had unintended consequences: The manner in which it spotlighted the authorial person reinforced rather than undermined interest in authorial life. Furthermore, its frequent mechanism of focusing of the author's body and its private actions actually promoted the connection between the author and the everyday person. The more authors were humanized by this process of attack, the more approachable their position seemed. Personalities may have attacked authors by showing their human flaws, but they also connected them to everyday reality and personhood.

As Peter Murphy succinctly defines it, personality functions by playing with the “attachment and slippage between authors (published names) and persons (bodies indicated by names)” (626). Personalities hinged on revealing those bodies in order to embarrass and categorize their victims. If we return to our opening examples, the body's role in personalities becomes evident—Leigh Hunt's inappropriately clothed body, Keats' allegedly intoxicated one, and Hazlitt's pockmarked face all stand in for their works and serve as the means of condemnation. To great extent, what was most personal about personalities was precisely this

focus on the authorial body. However, we would be mistaken to completely collapse the personal and the private. Each of the bodily aspects from our examples was also visible to those who encountered those bodies. More than just the corporeal form behind the “cardboard cutout” of the name or pseudonym (Murphy, 634), the body was constructed by personalities as a particularly unstable thing; its meaning must be construed through the quotidian iteration and social scrutiny. Pointing to the body in a personality does not allow for sense of ontological certainty, instead it highlights the instability of the person under examination, both as a social subject and as representation of society.

To illustrate this problem, let us return to the opening example that appears the most settled and unsocial: Hazlitt’s pimples. The insidious effect of accusing someone of having pimples is that the attack cannot be disproved. Hazlitt could present a clear face around Edinburgh or have affidavits sworn, printed, and circulated, but he could not *prove* that he did not have pimples. His accusers could always respond that while he might not have pimples on that particular day, he would have them again, at some point. Pimples are a deformity, certainly, but they are not a stable one. The pimple, as the epitome of a personality, draws our attention to how it constructs the body through the occasional and the intermittent. The instantiated lapse in proper embodiment—or proper dressing: recall Leigh Hunt’s yellow trousers and flesh-coloured stockings—cannot be refuted because it *could* have happened in the past and could happen again. The slipperiness of the body as it is constructed by personalities draws attention to the person of the author not as a static state but as something variable, existing within time. What is personal about authors is their ability to be different day to day, to be or fail to be congruent with their own likeness. Far from stabilizing authors through an appeal to the body, the personality unsettles them. They are always in a position of non-self-identity, of decay, or of becoming. It is in this manner that personality draws attention to the author as *living*.

When reviewers referred to an author's body in their attacks, they represented it as constructed through, and maintained by, habitual actions. For instance, for the *Quarterly Review*, John Clare's weak body provides an excuse for his presenting himself to the public as an author, while his bodily labor has a crucial role in producing his poetry. The reviewer explains that despite the fact of Clare's "slender frame" and his lack of "strength or relish" for physical activity, "his mother found it necessary to drive him from the chimney corner to exercise and to play, whence he quickly returned, contemplative and silent." (*QR* 23:45 [May 1820] 167-8). Later, his father's illness, rather than his mother's continued attempts to socialize him, would drive Clare out of the house to work, this work providing him the "scenes so congenial to his taste" that made him a good poet (*QR* 23:45 [May 1820] 174). Alienation from this environment and these occupations, the reviewer warns, will undermine him as a poet:

[W]e entreat him to continue something of his present occupations;—to attach himself to a few in the sincerity of whose friendship he can confide, and to suffer no temptations of the idle and the dissolute to seduce him from the quiet scenes of his youth—scenes so congenial to his taste,—to the hollow and heartless society of cities; to the haunts of men who would court and flatter him while his name was new, and who, when they had contributed to distract his attention and impair his health, would cast him off unceremoniously to seek some other novelty. (*QR* 23:45 [May 1820] 173-4)

Here the common trope of avoiding the corruptions of the city is subtly transformed by the reviewer's attention to Clare's body. His success as a poet threatens to end his link to the physical labor that made him a good one. Clare is caught between the poles of personal prosperity and the need to continually reconstitute the same self through the same activities. By attacking authors through their bodies and habits, personality makes available an understanding of the body as performance rather than ontology and lays the groundwork for the authorialization of the quotidian person found in the late-Romantic writing of De Quincey, Lamb, Hazlitt, and Lockhart discussed in my final chapter.

When the authorial body appears in a personality, it appears as something unstable; personalities continue to point to how bodies are constructed through habits, social rituals, or even accidents. The authorial body draws attention to the instability of the authorial life. Even as personalities attempt to pin an author down to a set of images, judgments, or interpretations, the instability of the body that personality points to causes it to slip away. Paradoxically, personality arises as a means of dealing with a surplus of authors, but it ends up cementing the problematic importance of the personal to the idea of an author. Living authors, in particular, provide the newest and most exciting ground for this work. It is this involvement with the living author, and the further challenges such a figure lays down for society, that the next chapter will address.

Chapter 3: Confronting the Living Author

In his 1819 pamphlet *Letter to William Gifford*, William Hazlitt attacked the *Quarterly Review*'s editor for his personal and politically-motivated reviewing practices, accusing him of evaluating writers based on their government sympathies rather than their literary merits. Hazlitt's challenge neatly summarizes the mechanics of political reviewing in this period. Such reviews are less literary evaluations than a signal of political allegiance: "When you damn an author, one knows that he is not a favourite at Carlton House. When you say that an author cannot write common sense or English, you mean that he does not believe in the doctrine of *divine right*. [...] Your praise or blame has nothing to do with the merits of work, but with the party to which the writer belongs" (1819, 5). Hazlitt's perceptive summary of Gifford's political motivations, however, identifies another, overarching aspect of book reviewing culture: the problem of living authors. In challenging Gifford's methods, Hazlitt presents the narrative of surplus that we will recognize from the preceding chapter. Gifford attacks living authors because he is stuffed with texts and therefore is unable to respond to their works. He is a kind of automaton, stuffed with printed paper: "The amiable and elegant author of Rimini [Leigh Hunt] thought he was appealing to something human in your breast, in the recollection of your "Dear Ann Davies;" he touched the springs, and found them "stuffed with paltry blurred sheets" of the *Quarterly Review*, with notes from Mr. Murray, and directions how to proceed with the author, from the Admiralty Scribe" (1819, 24). Overstuffed with his own productions and political directives, Gifford's heart cannot be touched by Hunt's poetry. His mechanisms of feeling are compromised by an excess of text. The reviewing project squeezes out any receptivity to poetry that Gifford might have enjoyed.

For Hazlitt, this excess of texts compounds with Gifford's bad disposition, resulting in his hostility to the living:

Is there any thing in your nature and disposition that draws to it only the infirm in body and oppressed in mind; or that, while it clings to power for support, seeks consolation in the daily soothing spectacle of physical malady and morbid sensibility? [...] You are enamoured of suffering, and are at peace only with the dead. (1819, 25)

Gifford's obsession with personalities proves to be a drive toward death—leading him to seek out and emphasize others' infirmities and to feel truly comfortable only with the dead. Hazlitt's chain of images is illustrative of the predicament of periodical writing: the personal reviewing strategy motivates an interest in pathological bodies from which the only escape is death. Romantic periodical writers will prove that while the sick and deformed are interesting and make for good copy, it is only the dead author that can fit comfortably within the critical project. It is the periodical press that allows writers like Hazlitt and Gifford to explore the complications of this seeming obvious distinction between living and dead authors, identifying the living author as a surprisingly problematic element of their culture.

I: What is a Living Author?

Living authors were the life's blood of the Romantic periodical press, necessary both as reviewers and as the subjects of reviews. Yet despite this seemingly self-evident fact, the realities of dealing with living authors proved disruptive. My previous chapter explored one aspect of that controversy—personalities—in which the real facts of an author's life are allowed to outweigh the content of his or her books. In such attacks, the fact of an author being alive facilitates and dictates reception. But this technique also increasing the visibility of living authors—inviting readerly interest in what it means to be such a figure. In *Beppo*, Byron expressed the period's prevailing discomfort with meeting with the author as a category of living person:

One hates an Author that's all Author, fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them or think (LXXV, 1-4)

Byron's condemnation draws attention to the dangerous collapse of personal and professional identities that the personality-driven portrait of the living author invites. This kind of author is "all Author", difficult to address and irritating in social interactions.

Our understanding of Romantic authorship has been undergoing a process of steady expansion in the decades since Jerome McGann drew attention to the influence of Romanticism's self-conceptions on the critical project. Criticism, McGann charged, had uncritically absorbed the self-representations of canonical Romantic poets, centering its understanding on the self-definitions of Wordsworth and Coleridge (82). Subsequent developments in Romantic criticism have challenged both this earnestness and this canon. Jack Stillinger followed McGann's call for a more social understanding of author, debunking the "myth of solitary genius" in the work of Wordsworth, Keats, and Coleridge and replacing it with a theory of multiple authorship (199). Jeffrey Cox has extended this project to the Cockney School, advocating for the author as "a nexus of interpersonal, cultural, social, and economic forces" rather than the "solitary singer declaiming alone on the mountaintop" (6-7). Moving beyond the old canon, Sonia Hofkosh has interrogated how female authorship destabilized the male model, citing the way that "the bodies of real women and the sexual politics enacted by them and through them" haunts the male narrative (11) and Anne K. Mellor has questioned the relevance of the "Romantic" periodization to women writers, whose "religious, political, and sociological experiences" remained largely unchanged between 1700 and 1900 (398). In each of these successive revisions, our understanding of the authorship in the Romantic period has moved further from the idea of the lone, male genius author, stressing the importance of the social to the concept of the author.

In more recent years, the growing field of Romantic periodicals has provided an opportunity to further nuance the study of the period's authorship. Anonymous and pseudonymous as well as digressive and diffuse, periodical writing does not easily read as

authorial at all. But as Mark Schoenfield has established, even anonymous and pseudonymous agents wielded authorial clout in the Romantic period: “For Scott [...] pseudonymity did not drain the text of authorship, but allowed him to script the persona of the author at a remove from biographical limitations” while “Francis Jeffrey’s anonymity as the *Edinburgh* Reviewer, in contrast [...] did not obscure his presence but broadened it both across contributors (who complained about their work being edited beyond recognition) and across other journals that adopted the *Edinburgh*’s standards of professionalism” (125). For Schoenfield, a prioritization of named authorship or book authorship obscures the actual cultivation of persona and the operation of authorial power in the period. Francis Jeffrey, as anonymous, celebrity editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, looms large not merely as the author of that entire periodical, but of the book-reviewing culture that it spawned.

In fact, Romantic periodicals were perfectly positioned to understand authorship. Book reviews commented on the authorial performances not just of living greats but scribblers, hacks, bookmakers, and literary drudges—the Romantic period had a plethora of ways to taxonomize those published writers who occupied the opposite pole of genius. Among these lower orders were found the periodicals writers themselves. They were in the unique position of writing *about* authorship as much as they practiced it. This chapter will focus on the unique perspective on authorship that emerges out of the experience of writing for the Romantic era’s great book reviewing periodicals—the focus on living bodies and their ramifications for criticism and interpretation.

For periodical writers, authorship is a practice rather than a state of being. The term itself carries pejorative connotations that link it to labor and trade. In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge refers to the “profession of literature, or, to speak more plainly, the trade of authorship” (127), explicitly troubling the class status of the author by linking him to the “plain” practice of

trade. “Authorship” denotes a particular way of making money and raises suspicions about the kind of social behavior that accompanies such work. For example, an *Edinburgh Review* examination of Goethe’s *Memoirs* occasions the following analysis:

The groundlings who imagine that they belong to the commonwealth of letters, incessantly employ themselves in making good their pretensions, and in crying up the consequence of the cast in which they think they are included. With them, a book is the sweetest, dearest thing- - - -The blue-stockings lady canvasses the merit of the last new poem with the tea-table bard; and both a wrapt in mawkish enthusiasm. *The puny author is always redolent of authorship.* He is a journeyman, who always smells of the shop, and who is always showing off his wares, and advertising his trash. These poor creatures can live only in authorship: lift them out of the medium in which they dabble, and they shrink up to nothing, like sea-blubbers taken out of the water.” (ER 28 no. 55 [March 1817] 85, my emphasis)

To be “redolent of authorship” is to openly acknowledge that writing is one’s occupation, implying that authorship is a mundane practice rather than an elevated state. It is a sure indication that one is among the groundlings rather than the true members of the literary world. Authorship in this formulation indicates vain self-promotion and a specific kind of worrisome professionalization: not the idea of someone making a living by literature so much as the problem of people who consider their authorial identity to be the most essential part of themselves. These authors cannot be separated from their labor—bringing its stink into social settings, and even living in it as their native element.

It is this pejorative meaning of authorship that is so relevant to the problematic idea of the “living author”: Living authors are real, knowable social beings, their authorship is on display in all of its daily mundanity. It does not come bolstered by the kind of fatalistic promise that McGann identified as part of the Romantic Ideology. As Charles Bernstein explains, Romantic Ideology includes a “presumption of the poet’s linear development” or “biographic teleology” (163). The reality of reviewing living authors in the periodical press makes this assumption impossible. The self-representations of the as-yet uncanonized Romantic poets are hard to

differentiate from the journeyman-author “showing off his wares” and “advertising his trash”. As the *Edinburgh Review* opines, periodical criticism is necessary to contain such excesses:

We need only run over the names of Darwin, Day, Beddoes, Southey, Coleridge, and Priestley, to make ourselves perfectly intelligible. It is partly, no doubt, because they are ships in a river, but chiefly, we believe, for want of that wholesome discipline of derision to which every thing is subjected in London, and which amply atones for the finer beauties, which it nips and shrinks, by repressing the fungous excrescences of presumption and extravagant vanity. (*ER* 9:17 [October 1806] 147).

The “wholesome discipline of derision” is the recourse of writers who are asked to construct biographic teleology before the life and work have been achieved. Their quotidian labor in the periodical press prompts them to question what it means to review someone who is still alive, how one might theorize their authorship and determine what living authors mean to their current moment.

As a term to describe a kind of textual producer, “living author” comes to prominence during the Romantic period. By 1781, Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets* has stoked the public appetite for authorial lives. Providing access to the lives of dead poets, the essays accompanied reprintings of their works, making an implicit argument for the relevance of poetic life as a “critical methodology” in the interpretation of poetry (Cafarelli, 33). Following Johnson’s death, Boswell’s *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791) would provide an even more personal, extensive authorial biography. Yet something fundamental had shifted by 1816, when Henry Colburn published the *Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland; comprising Literary Memoirs and Anecdotes of their Lives; and a Chronological Register of their Publications*, which ran to 450 pages of densely-printed double columns and struggled to provide a more perfunctory social classification of its subjects. In this publication, Maria Edgeworth is represented only by a list of works and the following history: “EDGEWORTH, MARIA, daughter of Richard Lovell E.

Esq. and one of the most ingenious female writers of the present day” (105). Meanwhile, Byron’s entry focusses more on the disposition of his property than his poetry:

BYRON (GEORGE GORDON BYRON), LORD, grandson of Admiral B. born about 1788, succeeded his great uncle in 1798. In 1812 his lordship disposed of Newstead Abbey, the family mansion near Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, which he has commemorated in one of his early compositions, for about 150,000*l*. Besides several beautiful pieces in a volume of “Imitations and Translations,” published by Mr. Hobouse, whom he accompanied in his travels in Greece and Turkey, his lordship has written: [list of publications]” (51)

Where the *Lives of the Poets* conferred clear canonical value on its subject, this dictionary struggles to express life and worth decisively. Originally proposed as part of a “yearly report exclusively devoted to the actual state of Literature and the Arts”, the biographical dictionary proved too unwieldy, and was only printed as this one volume (vi). Despite the promise of its title, the dictionary falls short of its intention to deliver “literary memoirs and anecdotes”. It is at once a clear expression of the interest that living authors held in the period, and the inability of such compendia to do anything particularly helpful with them. The entry on William Wordsworth proves perhaps the most telling, as the neutral voice of the dictionary results in what is perhaps the vaguest description of his current reputation:

WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM, Esq. late of St. John’s College at Cambridge, and at present distributor of stamps for the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland. This gentleman stands at the head of a particular school of poetry, the characteristic of which is simplicity. His publications are [list]. 399.

Wordsworth’s “particular school” offers no indication of the vitriol with which his poems had been met by reviewers like Jeffrey; the entry implies indifference to his characteristic “simplicity” rather than its hotly contested value. Books of this nature are not only laborious to produce, they are instantly out of date, and ill-suited to respond to the changes that a catalogue of living authors must undergo. The *Dictionary of Living Authors* is most interesting as a failure. Its shortcomings highlight the reason why periodicals—with their greater frequency and responsiveness—played a greater role in explaining the living author instead.

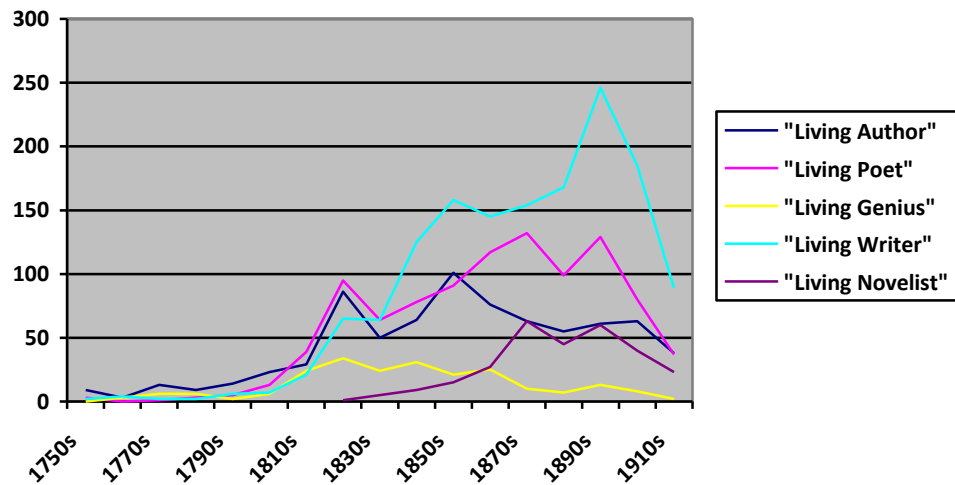


Fig 1. Usage of terms for living authorship in the *British Periodicals* database.

Using the *British Periodicals* database, I have tracked the usage of the term “living author” as well as several related variations (“living poet”, “living writer”, etc) between 1750 and 1919. Samples were taken for each decade, and while there are some shortcomings to such a scan of the database, the overall trend is compelling.²⁷ As the chart above demonstrates,

²⁷ My primary reservation is that text recognition is still imperfect. The software often struggles with the small type and fainter print typical of cheaper publications, in addition different typefaces sometimes used for emphasis may not register well. An additional caveat lies in the fact that periodical publications themselves increased in number over the course of the period examined. While the chart displays an increase in raw numbers from next-to-nothing to defined peaks and valleys, it does not represent proportional values in the use of the term.

I include comparable Google Books n-gram results here as well, which offer a potential representation of relative frequency, tracking a slower increase in the living authors prominence. Like with the *British Periodicals* database, OCR issues remain problematic, especially prior to 1800. Unfortunately, the Google results combine data for books with that for bound volumes of periodicals, which makes it impossible to provide a clear book-versus-periodical comparison of the usage of the term, all while counting the multiple instances in a single periodical as one data point. I am including a copy of the chart below: It does demonstrate an uptick in all terms except “living author” over the course of the Romantic period, but the individual oscillations are not as neatly coordinated to events as in the *British Periodicals* sample. Books are more slowly produced and therefore less responsive to trends on the more quotidian level, which may have contributed to the muddiness of this representation of the shift.

the initial explosion in the use of the term (living + author/writer/poet) occurs in the Romantic period, with evident peaks in the 1820-9 decade. The terminology remains popular through the Victorian period, suggesting its standardization and acceptance by Victorian-era periodicals, with a more ragged peak in the 1850s-1870s, before a gradual decline at tending toward the end of the century.²⁸ The initial and most concentrated response to authorial livingness appears in the 1820s—it is the Romantic period’s negotiation of this term that will make the more widespread Victorian usage possible.²⁹

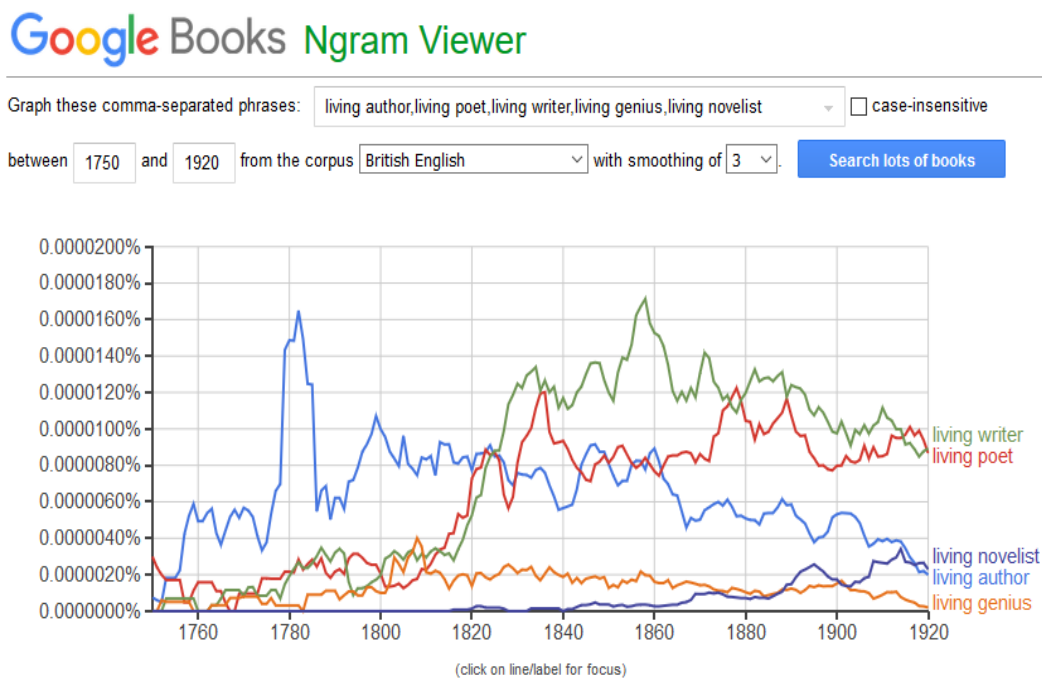


Fig 2. Google ngram illustration of the usage of terms for living authorship.

²⁸ The two peak periods (1820s and 1850s) may be correlated with two key deaths—Byron and Wordsworth—but these alone support rather than undermine the trend that I will argue the Romantic periodicals inaugurate: an intense interest in authors as *living*. Attention to them as great living authors on the occasion of their deaths is merely another aspect of this interest.)

²⁹ Variations between different terms used can be explained by the popularity of the term attached to “living”. So, the sharp decline in the use of “living genius”, for example, after the Romantic period has more to do with the Victorian’s waning interest in genius, rather than a waning interest in livingness, which

The “living author” and “living poet” emerge through these statistics as two of the most important descriptions of living writers in the Romantic period. At the moment of their early popularity, however, they provided sites of tension and instability. In this chapter I will address the living author through two main moments. First, the 1802-1820 stretch when periodicals confronted the living author on a case-by-case basis through reviews, and secondly, the 1820s when magazines made a more systematic effort to engage and experiment with it. This earlier, less structured period is essential: it is where the reactive process of book-reviewing made new insights available to periodical writers. The later, more organized approach, with which I will close, signals the stabilization of the living author’s meaning, and demonstrates the strategies by which it was managed.

Prior to the 1820s the term “living author” appeared mainly in book reviews. Its usage in this context reveals the logical contradictions produced by the need to discuss living authorship. I will begin, then, with two exemplary instances:

A great living poet is not like a distant volcano, or an occasional tempest. His is a volcano in the heart of our land, and a cloud that hangs over our dwellings; and we have some cause to complain, if, instead of genial warmth and grateful shade, he darkens and inflames our atmosphere with perpetual explosions of fiery torrents and pitchy vapours. Lord Byron’s poetry, in short, is too attractive and too famous to lie dormant or inoperative; and therefore, if it produce any pain or pernicious effects, there will be murmurs, and ought to be suggestions of alteration.

(“Lord Byron’s Poetry” *ER* 27:54 [December 1816] 250)

There is certainly no living poet whose works seem to come from him with so much ease, or who so seldom appears to labour, even in the most burdensome part of his performances.

(“Scott’s *Lady of the Lake*” *ER*, 16:32 [August 1810] 272)

we can see remains high with the other search terms until the end of the century. “Living novelist” is likewise an outlier because of the newness of the term ‘novelist’.

In both of the passages above, the reviewer invokes the category of the “living poet” to understand and evaluate the books under consideration. In the first, the dark Byronic imagery imbues the term with a theatrical importance. Here, the living poet tyrannizes over the public sphere. Byron is represented as larger than any other writer: he must be analyzed and criticized, because of the godlike power his words hold over the entire atmosphere. Read in this way, the living poet—at least a great one—is at once inside and out of the present moment. His effects are nation-wide, but the prospect of his being influenced by the nation’s “suggestions of alteration” appears slim. Figured as a volcano, he is at once significant, unpredictable, and devastating.

The second quotation points, in its turn, to a more mundane version of the “living poet”, but even this figure is situated in an ambiguous relation to his present. Here, the reviewer applauds Walter Scott’s singular ease of composition. Within his present moment, he is truly exceptional. However, the reviewer refrains from making a direct comparison between him and his dead predecessors. Despite ranking among the best of the living, he still does not deserve comparison with what has come before. He is caught in a moment of limbo: too good for his present time, but restrained from entering into the canon by the very fact of his life. In both of these passages, a living poet is placed in a position at once exalted by and removed from the present, isolated and difficult to place in hierarchies of evaluation. And, like the village in the shadow of the volcano, the reviewer is stuck waiting for the explosion.

II: Death, Neglect, and Apostasy – Narratives of Living Authorship

The fundamental challenge presented by the living author to the periodical reviewer is the need to narrate this period of waiting. A central part of the periodical reviewer’s work was the narration of authorial careers—a duty about which they were territorial. Mark Schoenfield notes how Byron’s production of retrospectives on himself from *Childe Harold* on “disrupted the

periodical industry's ability to produce its own narratives of his career" and was greeted with consternation (166). Despite the difficulties it presented, periodicals insisted on their right to narrate ongoing authorial life, and even developed the generic conventions around such accounts. In the Romantic period, death, neglect, and apostasy furnished the primary "plots" through which authorial life was understood.

However it may strike modern sensibilities, beginning a discussion of narratives of authorial lives with accounts of death would not strike Romantic readers as counterintuitive. In the periodical, the false death report emerged as an important way for writers and reviewers to control the frustrating living author. Its most self-reflexive instance, Charles Lamb executed his own magazine persona "Elia", announcing that having "lived just long enough [...] to see his papers collected in a volume [...] the LONDON MAGAZINE will henceforth know him no more" (*LM* 7:37 [January 1823] 19). The false death allows for a counterfactual end to authorial life. It permits a hypothetical exploration of the kind of evaluation that usually appears in obituaries, but its explicit falseness frees its writer from accusations of bad taste. It allows periodical authors to adopt the tone of finality and certainty that was habitually denied to them in their book reviews. But unlike a literal death, such as Byron's, it allows the fictitious, recently-deceased body to be made the center of the action—without risking libel or challenging decency. Within my argument, it stands as an extreme instance of the period's engagement with authorial lives and bodies. Only at the point of death can they be most clearly discerned.

The death of the author presents an opportunity to settle the meaning of the author's works while retaining the right to produce personalities. The fourth Cockney School attack in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* contains one such report. Assessing Leigh Hunt's *Foliage*, the reviewer falsely presents the book as a "posthumous" volume in order to pronounce with finality on Hunt's life and work. Foreclosing on Hunt's still unfolding career, "Z" (penned by John

Gibson Lockhart) pronounces him “the most suburban of poets,” stressing his inability to capture the great or the sublime in his poetry: “Suppose for a moment Leigh Hunt at sea—or on the summit of Mont Blanc! It is impossible” (*BW* 6:31 [Oct 1819]: 74). And while this “posthumous” review would seem like the perfect place to take stock of Hunt’s corpus and development, Lockhart instead returns to other, living preoccupations: the author’s body and his social milieu.

Death provides the occasion to make the living relations of the author visible: “This is a posthumous publication, and has been given to the world, we understand, by the author’s executors, Mr John Keats, Mr Vincent Novello, and Mr Benjamin Haydon” (*BW* 6:31 [Oct 1819]: 70). By dying, Hunt makes his social group more evident—and by killing Hunt off, the reviewer catches that group unaware. As a posthumous volume, *Foliage* is a failure; “Z” is quick to underline how it lacks the canonizing elements of a biography and a portrait: “We have heard it whispered, that they found among his papers a quire of hot-pressed wire-wove, gilt Autobiography. Why not publish select portions of that? Neither have they give us a Face” (*BW* 6:31 [Oct 1819]: 70). Moreover, Hunt’s death is occasioned by what *Blackwood’s* had long found one of his most annoying habits of consumption:

There is too much reason to believe that this everlasting tea-drinking was the chief cause of Leigh Hunt’s death. The truth is, that he had for many years been sipping *imitation-tea*, a pleasant but deleterious preparation—more pernicious by far than the very worst port; and there can be little doubt, that if he had drunk about a bottle of black-strap in the fortnight, and forsworn thin potation altogether, he might have been alive, and perhaps writing a sonnet at this very moment. (*BW* 6:31 [Oct 1819]: 73)

Reflecting on the “dead” body of this author, “Z” actually blames Hunt for his own death—reactivating some of the magazines favorite jabs at his health and eating habits. By introducing Hunt as a dead author, the review is able to invoke the finality of the obituary while maintaining the practice of personality that would be unacceptable in the case of actual death. This hybrid form allows the periodical to at once dismiss the problematic aspects of the living author (his

future and ability to respond) while maintaining their mode of treating marginalized living authors (personality).

The *Examiner* of the 13th April 1817 features an even richer false death report by Leigh Hunt entitled “Death and Funeral of the Late Mr. Southey”. Announcing Southey’s death at the moment of his promotion to Poet Laureate, the article provides an opportunity to explore the disjuncture between authorial names and bodies. In the article, the “better portion” of Southey is reported dead. He is accused of political apostasy: his youthful Jacobinical poems are contrasted with his current situation as Poet Laureate to a reactionary Regency government and his growing prominence as a reviewer for the Tory *Quarterly Review*. Hunt announces the death of this living author as a way to mark the death of his radical principles: Southey’s body may live on, but the author who was indicated by that name is dead to the radicals and reformers at the *Examiner*. Despite remaining materially the same person, Southey has nevertheless changed and the textual Southey known to the *Examiner* readership no longer publishes. This fictitious death enforces what Foucault has defined as the author function, which guarantees a set of works that exhibit “a standard level of quality”, “conceptual or theoretical coherence”, “stylistic uniformity”, and a “definite historical figure” around which events converge (1630). Finding Southey’s work uneven and incoherent, the *Examiner* invents his death, refusing to acknowledge the “changes caused by evolution, maturation, or outside influence” that could go to explain this incoherence (Foucault, 1630). The false death report offers a counterfactual biography, and more importantly an alternative author function—one that does not incorporate the recent aberrant works and seeks to redefine the meaning of the author’s body.

Southey’s corpse provides an occasion to reveal his true meaning as an author. Arresting his life at the moment of his most public political betrayal, the *Examiner* explores how that body illustrates his social and literary position. The article foregrounds that body with a dramatic, and

typographically unusual, reproduction of the supposed funeral cortège. Leading the procession is a transhistorical parade of tyrants and turncoats, including a deputation from the Spanish Inquisition and a group of French Papists “dragging in the mud the Effigies of VOLTAIRE and CALAS”. Southey’s body follows, set off in the text with large type and braces. The more usual sort of mourners come after, but they are fewer—only those who will most miss him: notably “MURRAY the Bookseller as Chief Mourner”; William Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, and therefore another one who makes a living off Southey’s work; and (with seeming reluctance) the Tory M.P. George Canning “in a close[d] Carriage”, followed by the “Empty Carriages of the Ministers and Court”:

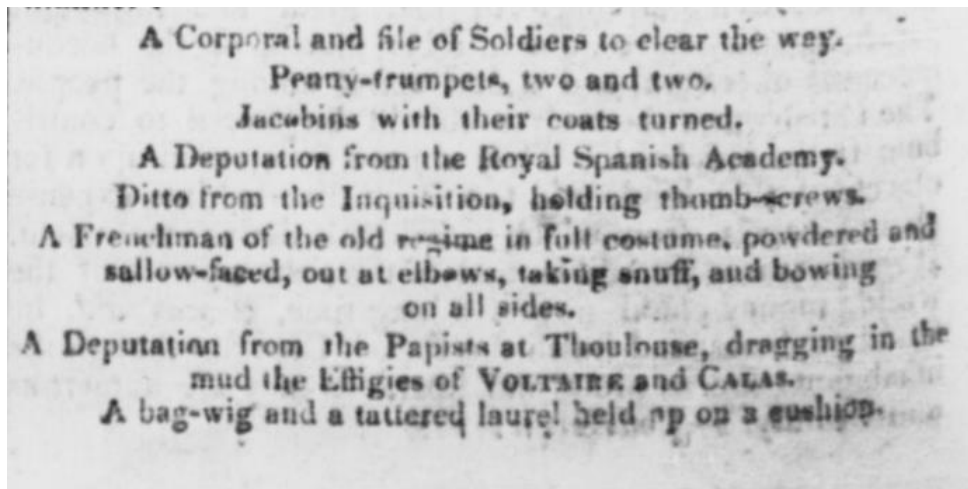


Fig. 3. “Death and Funeral of Mr. Southey” (*Examiner* [13 April 1817] 485).

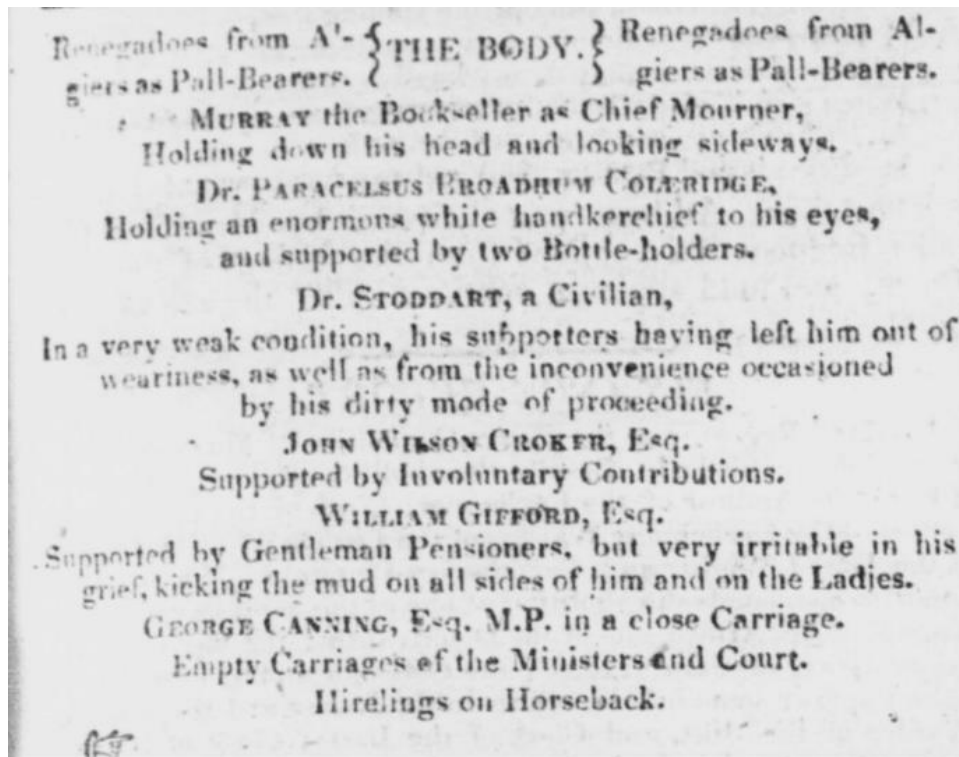


Fig. 4. "Death and Funeral of Mr. Southey" (*Examiner* [13 April 1817] 486).

The construction of the procession separates Southey's political allegiance from his financial value. The body is preceded by its symbolic relationship to a host of tyrants and followed by his actual, real-life mourners—in Southey's case his employers, with the pathetic qualified support of the closed and empty carriages of the régime. The placement of the body between these clearly delineated groups draws attention to the difficulty of connecting the metaphoric expression of the Southey's support of tyranny with the mundane realities in which his labor is much more economically than politically valued. Spending too much attention on this double-insult, as I just have, reveals that the second group undermines the believability of the metaphorical first group. If Southey is as politically insignificant as the empty carriages suggest, then the troupe that precedes his body must be imaginary. The dead authorial body both makes and unmakes this connection, marking it as a site of trouble that provides access to the real

economics of writing while undermining the possibility of writing having *any other* real social effect. By producing the death and funeral of Southey, the *Examiner* invokes a need to narrate and evaluate his life, drawing attention to the problem of evaluating the impact of one's literary work, and suggesting that the greater the celebrity of the author, the more problematic any assessment of him will be.

In the Romantic period, literary celebrity could serve a variety of functions; contemporary critics have connected it to discourses of genius, nationalism, and especially capitalism. For David Minden Higgins, the evolution of celebrity within a culture of genius was “no coincidence”: “both articulate the individualism associated with the emergence of democratic capitalism during the nineteenth century” (42). Tom Mole describes the structure of celebrity culture as a “hermeneutic of intimacy”: “It responded to the surfeit of public personality by branding’s an individual’s identity in order to make it amenable to commercial promotion. It palliated the feeling of alienation between cultural producers and consumers by constructing a sense of intimacy” (2007, 16). Juggling the twin poles of individuality and relatability, discourses around celebrity sought to make public figures both interesting and accessible to the same audience that book reviews addressed. There is much overlap, with book reviews playing a key role in the cultivation of literary celebrity.

In fact, conceptions of celebrity suffered from some of the same narrative imperatives as the living author. As Tom Mole describes it: “Branding an identity that would be amenable to commercial promotion required subjectivity to be understood as self-identical over time, but continually developing towards greater self-expression or self-fulfillment” (2007, 25). Such teleological understandings of celebrity do not offer the same play that periodical experimentation with living authorship allows. Indeed, as Jason Goldsmith explains, celebrity was largely conceived of as separating the individual in question from themselves. Nationalistic celebrity,

especially “alienates the individual from his or her public image. The name ‘Walter Scott’ and, by extension, the person, has become ‘national property’” (30). Indeed, it is in the contradictory, counterfactual pages of the periodical that categories like celebrity can be reinterrogated. The false death report of a living author like Southey presents the most tantalizing aspect of celebrity culture—the physical presence of the persona in question—under erasure (death). The fictitiousness of Southey’s funeral permits the clarification of his true merit, and underlines how the consistency of his author-function must be *constructed*. By exploring multiple narrativizations of authorial life in this manner, the periodical account of living authorship offered a degree of play that the more fully commercialized discourse of celebrity could not allow.

False death reports challenged one of the predominant poetic narratives of authorial life. Alongside the nascent celebrity culture that Tom Mole associates with Scott and Byron lay what Andrew Bennett has called the “Romantic culture of posterity”. According to Bennett, Romantic poets of the Wordsworthian camp connected contemporary neglect with true literary genius, assuming that “the living poet is, necessarily, *always* neglected” (30). It was a comforting narrative for unpopular living poets, promising to reward “the inspired, prophetic figure of the genius” for being neglected in favor of “the mercenary professional craftsman” (42). The centrality of death, real or anticipated, to this neglect narrative of authorship should not be underestimated. Neglect narratives of authorship do not know how to account for authorial life other than as a period of trial or limbo before the redemptive acknowledgement of posthumous acclaim. In a sense, the neglect narrative adopts a millennial attitude: only death can allow posterity to raise the author up on the last day. The very prevalence of the neglected genius narrative provides negative proof of the difficulty of narrating authorial life. In universally interposing death between publication and true reception, the neglect narrative does not attempt to narrate the experience of imperfect present reception. In fact, the term “neglect” imposes a

misleading blankness over what might more accurately be called abuse. Neither Keats nor Wordsworth nor Coleridge was actually neglected, instead undergoing extensive and usually hurtful contemporary commentary. In the neglect narrative, contemporary reception is wiped blank by the redemption of posthumous canonization. Bennett develops the neglect narrative from the writings of poets who saw themselves as neglected, a fact that makes the erasure of contemporary abuse hardly surprising. Such a mode is uninterested in conceptualizing living authorship outside of martyrdom and the anticipation of death.

On the pages of their periodicals, however, there exists a more powerful and pervasive narrative for still-living authors. Exemplified in turn by each of the Lake poets, the governing narrative for surviving authors was one of apostasy. The motif of the poet's early death—exemplified in Bennett's account by Chatterton—finds the poet's life-length to be inversely proportional to his merits (53). Periodicals, too, were skeptical of long-lived authors, often treating them as dead to produce a sense of critical finality. The tripled apostasies of the Lake poets added a new element to this representation of life, mapping life-length onto an imperative political outcome. Crystallized by the radical outcry against the turncoat Lakers, the narrative strongly correlates politics with lifespan, insisting that only those who die young die while still good, or still radical. The continued life of the author becomes the condition of failure. According to the apostate narrative, living authorship is a state of inevitable decline. As such, this narrative is a symptom of the distress Romantic-period culture felt when faced with the need to narrate an uneven and potentially disappointing career. Contrary to a belief in progress that one might expect from a periodical press that took as its model the Whig *Edinburgh Review*, the apostate narrative is an expression of profound pessimism about the living author—that authorship is not only unstable but subject to inevitable decay.

Charles Mahoney and Jerome Christensen have already treated at length the importance of the political apostasies of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey to the history of Romanticism. Their analyses focus primarily on the accusations made by William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt—that is to say—the radical narrative of apostasy. Both Mahoney and Christensen, however, caution against reading too closely along with Hazlitt and Hunt’s individualized political concerns. Mahoney stresses the equivocal nature of apostasy: it can have opposite readings depending on the position of the commenter.

Apostasy is a principled, lonely diversion from the mainstream, and can therefore be felt to be courageous and good. But it is also the desertion of a position, or of a loyalty formerly held, and can therefore be felt to be a betrayal, a renunciation – at the very least a manifestation of inconstancy in one’s character. Apostasy is thus a protean concept, being capable of radical alternation between extremes, depending on one’s point of view or, as we would say now, on one’s political position. (2)

In pointing out this variability in how apostasy is perceived, Mahoney works to distance his examination of the famous Lake poet apostasies from readings that judge the rightness or wrongness of either historical political position. Instead, he reframes politics as “the romantic text’s staging of its competing claims for *critical* control – a control not merely of a political crisis, but also and equally importantly of one in figuration” (4). This crisis over the control of a text and its readings serves to universalize and aestheticize the problem of apostasy in the reception of Romantic poetry. All poets are at risk of this problem of writing, regardless of actually political apostasy. Most importantly, it allows Mahoney to explore the unavoidability of apostasy and the risk of it rebounding back on the critic—whether it be Hazlitt himself or contemporary literary critics. Making apostasy into a problem of the act of writing, Mahoney revises and extends Jerome Christensen’s earlier, more overtly deconstructionist, claim that in acts of criticism one is “always already an apostate” (772). According to Christensen, apostasy is a pattern of repetition rather than a political event in an author’s life. For both Mahoney and Christensen, Romantic apostasy reveals more fundamental aspects of language and writing, with

Mahoney making a move toward greater historical specificity by linking the instability of apostasy to the battles over readership and reception in the Romantic period. I wish to take this argument further by arguing that apostasy is not merely an accusation but a *narrative* for the Romantic period. It is one means through which the period theorizes and explains living authorship. In other words, rather than being about writing, the apostate narrative is about *authorship*, in particular the problems raised by new kind of person—the living author—who becomes conspicuous in Romantic periodicals and who must be theorized by print culture for the first time.

Far from being limited to the political about-faces of Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, these accusations, I argue, go beyond attack to imagine a template for authorial life. In the case of Hazlitt and Hunt, they serve to map and explain a career teleology that slowly brought the Lake poets to their current, degraded state as cronies of power. Apostasy is read as a sign of authorial, if not political consistency. Thus, in an 1813 treatment of Madame de Staël's *Sur le suicide*, the *Edinburgh Review* excuses her lack of dedication to her values of "humanity" when she attacks Napoleon. Napoleon had persecuted her as an author, "harass[ing] her by successive mutilations of those works of which he professed to allow the publication" (*ER* 21:42 [July 1813] 425). The reviewer maps the recent events of European history onto Staël's personal life:

Every revolution of the present age has been an event in Mad. de Staël's private life. In a person of ardent sensibility amidst the agitations of an eventful life, we shall not severely blame some tendencies towards new exaggerations; and we cannot wonder that she should be disposed to an almost undistinguishing partiality for the character and measures of the enemies of her persecutor. The operation of so just a resentment on judgment, is neither to be forgotten nor condemned. (*ER* 21:42 [July 1813] 426)

The collapse of the personal and political in Staël's biography absolves her of any potential apostasy. Her identity as an author, and the desire to protect that part of her life, excuse any wavering of principle that the unsympathetic reviewer might detect.

Perhaps the most stunning version of the apostate narrative as a statement of consistency appears in Hazlitt's *Edinburgh* review of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, in which he rails against the self-indulgence of poets and their accompanying unsuitability to politics. Poets are "are dangerous leaders and treacherous followers. They inordinate vanity runs them into all sorts of extravagances; and their habitual effeminacy gets them out of them at any price" (*ER* 28:51 [August 1817] 514). For Hazlitt, this poetic character makes all political allegiances meaningless; all poets will eventually follow the same track through radicalism to conservative reaction: "Jacobins or Antijacobins—outrageous advocates for anarchy and licentiousness, or flaming apostles of persecution—always violent and vulgar in their opinions, they oscillate, with a giddy and sickening motion, from one absurdity to another, and expiate the follies of their youth by the heartless vices of their advancing age" (*ER* 28:51 [August 1817] 514). This kind of life, Hazlitt alleges, is an endless suite of mistaken expectations and generic misunderstandings. The poet is

[p]reposterously seeking for the stimulus of novelty in truth, and the éclat of theatrical exhibition in pure reason, it is no wonder that these persons at last became disgusted with their own pursuits, and that, in consequence of the violence of the change, the most inveterate prejudices and uncharitable sentiments have rushed in to fill up the *vacuum* produced by the previous annihilation of common sense, wisdom, and humanity. This is the true history of our reformed Antijacobin poets; the life of one of whom is here recorded. (*ER* 28:51 [August 1817] 514)

In this "true history" of the Lake poets, Hazlitt blames authorial character for the apostasy: it is a combination of vanity and effeminacy that propels the narrative. In progressing from absurdity to absurdity, the poets keep their old follies alive by attacking them—enjoying their old pet vices through the act of condemnation, just as "the regenerated sinner keeps alive his old raptures and new-acquired horrors, by anticipating endless ecstasies or endless tortures in another world"

(514). In such a narrative, moral conservatism is just the final turn of the self-indulgent screw. Apostasy becomes therefore a narrative of consistency. Hazlitt deploys the apostate narrative to produce a new, coherent author function in which poets have no real integrity from which to fall: even in the moment of professing revolutionary values of which he approves, they “caricature [these values] in their own persons” by acting them out like a “theatrical exhibition”. The apostate narrative is made predictable, even fatalistic, in Hazlitt’s account. As a model for the living author it prescribes a depressing consistency: the author is incapable of producing anything that does not refer back to his own self-indulgent impulses. His body figures as the ground through which to best understand problems of authorial life. It is the guarantor of consistency and the site where true character is revealed.

But the danger of apostasy, as Mahoney and Christensen both underline, is that it is always contagious, becoming a problem not just of some, but of all, writers. It is just as likely to infect a critic like Hazlitt himself. But in finding apostasy a fundamental component of poetic authorship, Hazlitt touches on something more than the vain and effeminate character with which he is so disgusted. The idea of apostasy as a fundamental condition of authorship appears more literally in the biographies of the Lake poets. For Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, it is initially religious apostasy that serves to justify their shift in profession. All three poets dealt with family expectation of a religious career and struggled with religious doubts. Richard Holmes explains how Coleridge’s religious beliefs combined with education setbacks to alter his life-trajectory:

There was no doubt that after Coleridge’s failure to win the Craven Scholarship, his whole attitude to academic success altered. There was now little chance that he would obtain a Fellowship, and his secret religious doubt made a conventional career in the Church impossible – though [his brother] George still hoped for one. [...] Yet this failure can be seen as an immensely liberating one: it saved Coleridge from a safe, Establishment career (as pursued by his brothers in the Church and the army), and threw him back on his inner, imaginative resources, which drew him powerfully and naturally

towards poetry, religious speculation, metaphysics, and the political idealism of the time.
(49)

Southey's career path, too, was derailed by doubts: "He was aware that [his uncle] Herbert wished him to follow in his footsteps by becoming an Anglican clergyman. Being unable to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, the very first of which enjoined belief in the Trinity, Southey could not contemplate a clerical career" (Speck, 34). Wordsworth, meanwhile, "entered Cambridge both dependent on the goodwill of his guardians who were putting up the money and only too well aware that he was expected to exploit both his native intellect and the advantages which connections might provide to prepare himself for a future in the Church or just possibly the law" (Gill, 40). Stephen Gill concludes that Wordsworth's eventual rejection of these parts stems from "a resistance to having his life shaped for him by those he did not like and in ways he could not approve" as well as his growing exposure to Unitarianism at the university (41, and note 19). The secret religious doubts harbored by Southey and Coleridge during their university education—along with Wordsworth's resistance to his family's wishes for his career—functioned to close off *the* avenue for educated men of their class: the established Church. Doubt about established religion and its close proximity to the beginning of their careers as poets can be read as a concomitant doubt about an expected life narrative. Without denying the realness of their religious concerns, this original apostasy serves a function in legitimizing their choice to disappoint family expectations, to forego the stability of a career in the Church, and to turn to writing in order to make money—that is to say, as an alternate career path as much as a calling.³⁰

³⁰ William Hazlitt himself was guilty of a similar reevaluation of his life-trajectory. Raised in the Dissenting tradition with the expectation of becoming a Unitarian minister, Hazlitt, too, rejected this path in favor of painting, and eventually, writing. As Duncan Wu proposes: perhaps Hazlitt's hypersensitivity to apostasy in others stems from his own identity as an apostate (61).

What is special here, is that the original apostasy only applies to particular kinds of writing: those that result in the production of something literary, one might say—or, better, those that depend on the kind of professional identity signaled by the pejorative sense of “authorship” as a kind of writing where what you write becomes the most significant part of your identity. The occasional author—such as the cleric who published his sermons or the traveler (commercial or otherwise) who prints an account of a voyage—does not depend on this initial apostasy the way the professional writer does. To be a professional writer, to aspire to support one’s self by writing and to base one’s identity on that fact is to be an apostate from some other life plan. The apostate narrative is one of the first formulations in which professional—indeed, living—authorship is imagined. It narrates the attempt to forge that category of professional author, only to fail and boomerang back to older models of authorship—namely the patronage that Wordsworth received as stamp collector or that Southey profited from as Poet Laureate. To read the apostate narrative as about the problem of money and available narratives of life-earning is to reassert its relevance to the print explosion the Romantic period and the liminal place occupied by these fledgling professional writers. To be an apostate is to express both the choice and the difficulty of making a living by writing. It is the inevitable effect of supporting the living authorial body while insisting on its relevance to artistic creation. Its prototype is not the starving artist, but a living and eating author: a figure far more unsettling because its survival implies both debasement and compromise.

The problem with looking at the apostate narrative only from the lens of Hazlitt and Hunt’s dismay is that we are apt to take it very literally and even more seriously. Yet apostasy served as an explanatory narrative in more comical contexts as well. If Hazlitt’s narrative about apostasy is about the inevitable bad character of poets, the narrative put forward by the team at *Blackwood’s Magazine* is about the life and maturation of the gentleman everyman. The space of

the *Noctes Ambrosianae* allows the Tories to extend the charge of apostasy to incorporate a desirable yet recalcitrant poet to their cause—Lord Byron. For example, Number IV of the *Noctes Ambrosianae* presents a portrait of Byron as a secret apostate to what appear to be his liberal views, someone whose poetry advances a covert Tory message. Transporting the persona Odoherty (one of the magazine’s fictional contributors) to Italy where Byron currently resides, they depict a “Byron” who is writing his way towards apostasy through *Don Juan*:

Why, what can be more plain that my intention? I drew a lively lad, neglected in his education, strong in his passions, active in his body, and lively in his brains; would you have had me make him look as wise as a Quarterly Reviewer? Every boy must sow his wild oats; wait till Don Juan be turned of fifty, and if I don’t represent him as one of the gravest and most devout Tories in the world, may I be hanged. As yet he has only been what Dr Southey once was, “a clever boy, thinking upon politics (and other subjects) as those who are boys in mind, whatever their age may be, do think.” Have patience. The Don may yet be Lord Chancellor ere he dies. (*BEM* 12:66 [July 1822] 104)

Don Juan’s apostasy is offered as the ultimate payoff, and underlying intention of the sensational poem. While Nicola Watson reports that “Byron at one stage explicitly politicized Juan’s prospective fate by proposing that his hero should end his days during the Terror at the hands of the French revolutionaries”, *Blackwood’s* projects a normative model of maturation in place of this tragic ending (192). By imagining an unfolding life-narrative that models Don Juan on Southey, the writers of this *Noctes* make it a poem about development, in which the eventual arrival at Toryism is equated with the arrival at adult male intellect. This “Byron”, rather than a dangerous Jacobin, is a subtle Tory—one who is playing a longer game, narrating and modelling the proper political progression over the course of an extended collection of cantos. “Byron” offers the deferred moment of apostasy to legitimate the current production. The conjunction of cleverness and passion in Don Juan serves as the guarantor of his turning out an excellent Tory in the end. His pranks are folded into the promise of redemption and made non-threateningly, legitimately entertaining.

Ultimately, this is what *Blackwood's* wants to do with Byron himself. As the dialogue continues, "Byron" defends the erotic content of his poem by appealing to the precedent of other poets who included love scenes: "Look at Homer, remember the cloud-scene. Look at Virgil, remember the cave-scene. Look at Milton, remember the bower-scene, the scene of "nothing loth". Why, sir, poets are like their heroes, and poets represent such matters (which all poets do and must represent) more or less warmly, just as they are more or less men" (*BEM* 12:66 [July 1822] 104). It is on this string of identities that the *Blackwood's* handling of the apostate narrative hinges: A poet's hero is a symbol of the poet himself, whose ability as a poet is a symbol of his manhood. The chain of slippage from fictional character, to author, to the idea of his male body, is precisely the slippage we have seen in "personalities" and in the living author concept more broadly. By identifying his Don Juan as a future apostate, "Byron" puts himself in the same category—suggesting that this apostasy is the criterion of manhood achieved. "Byron" aligns his work with a string of ultra-canonical authors, but suggests simultaneously that it is a juvenile part of an unfolding work and that its true political meaning has yet to be revealed. In a dizzying image, "Byron" basically asks us to imagine reading Homer or Milton as a serialized author, whose greatness and moral fitness would not be proved until the work (or the life) was completed. Confusing authorial death with the completion of the work, "Byron" parallels his life with Don Juan's – with each canto Don Juan catches up in age to his author. At the limit, when they are the same age, they will have collapsed into each other, culminating in Don Juan and Byron's simultaneous, apostatic return to Tory politics. Byron and Don Juan each are living under the apostate narrative as a kind of prophecy, one that will redeem their youthful actions and bring them back into the fold.

But the writers of this dialogue do not want their readers to have to take too much of this on faith. Behind closed doors, in the company of a true compatriot like Odoherly, "Byron"

reveals himself to have likes and values that align him with, rather than distance him from, from the magazine. Along with *Blackwood's*, he disdains the *London's* latest rustic poet, John Clare, who “may have written some pretty things, but he is taken now to slum, scissoring, namby pamby, and is quite spoiled”, foolishly thinking himself superior to *Blackwood's* own rustic James Hogg (*BEM* 12:66 [July 1822] 111). Rejecting the *Edinburgh Review's* editor Jeffery, “Byron” remarks: “After praising the Cockneys, who cares what he reviles?” thereby placing himself *against* Hunt—despite the fact that the real Byron was in Italy, with Hunt at the time, contributing to his *Liberal* (*BEM* 12:66 [July 1822] 107).

Most importantly, Byron's apostatic promise shares a sympathy with the magazine's mode and mandate. Unlike the relentlessly sincere Hunt, “Byron” and *Blackwood's* both understand that dogged consistency is not the same as true principle. Odoherly and “Byron” drink a toast to Kit North, while Odoherly expounds on his virtues as an editor:

[B]y doing all that ever these folks [Jeffery and the *Edinburgh*] could do in one Number, and then undoing it in the next,—puffing, deriding, sneering, jeering, prosing, piping, and so forth, he has really taken the thing into his own hands, and convinced the Brutum Pecus that ‘tis all quackery and humbug”. (*BEM* 12:66 [July 1822] 105)

North's editorship embraces the changeability that has been associated with living authors. He, like “Byron”, understands how a sneering, jeering spirit of contradiction can coexist with strict adherence to “two or three principles—I mean religion, loyalty, and the like” (*BEM* 12:66 [July 1822] 105). But North's greatest achievement, for Odoherly, is his elevation of the magazine to the status of a text like *Don Juan*. Through *Blackwood's* he has taught people “the great lesson, that Reviews, and indeed all periodicals, merely *quâ* such, are nothing. They take in his book not as a Review, to pick up opinions of new books from it, nor as a periodical, to read themselves asleep upon, but as a classical work, which happens to be continued from month to month” (*BEM* 12:66 [July 1822] 105-6). In making the magazine into a book which “happens to be” serialized,

North/Odoherty conjure it, too, as a product of deferred completion. The magazine can contradict itself month to month and engage in personalities and other sneers because it is part of a longer work—like *Don Juan*—on which final judgment cannot yet be declared. They adopt for the magazine as *privileges* those things that have been problematic about the living author—apostasy, deferred judgment, inconsistency—and demand for them the respect given to a literary classic.

Yet the greatest innovation of *Blackwood's* deployment of the apostate narrative is the manner in which it is shifted from being a model of poetic destiny, to one of personal destiny—a normal part of the maturation of gentleman of a certain class. In the fifth *Noctes Ambrosianae*, Kit North and his friends discover a group of Whigs communing behind a partition in Ambrose's Tavern. Rather than reacting with rage to their intrusion, Kit North addresses them warmly, hailing what they have in common: “Young gentlemen, we have been all Whigs in our day. It is a disease of the constitution” (*BEM* 12:68 [September 1822] 374). In addressing the young Whigs, North represents youth as a political disease, that, once overcome, will be marked by the healthy return to Tory principles—that is to say, precisely the act of apostasy of which Hunt and Hazlitt complained. Apostasy becomes the normative form of the gentleman's life-narrative; it is something that an elder Tory like North can trust to complacently, remaining ready to welcome the repentant Whigs to his side. As a life narrative, apostasy brings the author into the same orbit as the average man. The Whigs that North greets at Ambrose may not be authors or magazine writers, but they are written into the same narrative that Hunt and Hazlitt lamented as the fate of poets, and that the *Noctes* themselves had earlier ascribed to Byron.

The development of the Romantic apostate narrative recapitulates the progression that the living author undergoes: First, the fact of the author's ongoing life lends a frustrating instability to the career. Then, experimentation with techniques that limit, contain, or explain that changeability allows the periodical to reassert its dominance. And finally, this newly described living author

begins to shade into a more universal representation of (gentlemanly) personhood. Narratives of death, neglect, and apostasy all serves as key means for negotiating the disruptive meanings of still-unfolding authorial life. The narratives that this section has emphasized find their natural home in periodicals; they are connected to the diachronic process by which periodical writing is produced. In order to illustrate this, let us turn now to an instance of a great living author—Walter Scott—to demonstrate how crucial book-reviewing is to the confrontation of this disruptive figure.

III: Reviewing “Greatness” – The Case of Walter Scott

In the Romantic period, Walter Scott was a twice-great living author. His poetic career, launched in 1805 with *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* secured him a place as the contemporary poet most likely to be honored by posterity. His second career as the anonymous Author of Waverley brought him even greater popularity, amplified by his canny use of anonymity to establish the intriguing mystery of the “Great Unknown”. Scott was a particularly perceptive author; he recognized the value of his copyrights, retaining them for future reprinting, but he also understood the periodical world in ways that other copyright-conscious authors like Wordsworth did not. He was an original contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*, helped found the *Quarterly*, and continued to contribute to periodicals throughout his career. In 1818, he described to the Duke of Buccleugh his various periodical commitments and their motivations:

At the same time I cannot help laughing at the miscellaneous trash I have put out of my hand since coming to town and the various motives which made me undertake the jobs.
An article for the Edinburgh Review—this for the love of Jeffrey the Editor—the first time this ten years—
Do. being the Article Drama for the Edinburgh Encyclopedia. This for the sake of Mr. Constable the publisher—
Do. For the Blackwoodian Magazine—this for the love of the cause I espoused.
Do. for the Quarterly Review. This for the love of myself I believe or which is the same thing for the love of £100., which I wanted for some odd purpose. (1933, vol V, 223)

Scott was comfortable with the dynamics of divided persona and publication, sectioning off his periodical work to different outlets “for the love” of different personal causes and allegiances. Such work is not a departure from, but an intensification of, his behavior after the establishment of his poetic fame. Scott resisted putting his name to his novels and later minor poetic productions, insisting that “that will often pass tolerably which comes without name or pretension which is more hardly judged when known to [be] the production of a veteran scribbler” (1933, vol V, 82-3). Scott understood perhaps more fully than many, the variety of forms that authorship could take in the Romantic period. Scott’s doubled career provided a paired set of instances on which book reviewers were invited to work out the problems of the great living author. His popularity and productivity placed him insistently in the public sphere, forcing reviewers to abandon the tactics of dismissal, counterfactual assassination, and personality that were used to silence lesser living authors. As, first, a great living poet and, later, the greatest living novelist, Walter Scott is the field on which the superlative version of living authorship must be theorized.

To a great extent the fact that an author is still alive is made conspicuous by his or her continuing career—what the *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors* summarized with the chronology of works. This first, seemingly evident move invites the connection of biography with literary work. As Margreta de Grazia has noted in her survey of Shakespearean commentary in the Romantic period, it is only when the plays are put in order that readers are invited to think of a chronology of personal development (144), recalling the “biographic teleology” that Bernstein identified in the Romantic Ideology. Such a chronological and teleological impetus in criticism underlines the importance of book reviewing. Before the author’s death and the summation arguments of the obituary or collected edition, it is the unfolding series of book reviews and notices that construct a career. But this career can be hugely influenced by a periodical’s discretion, not only in selecting who to review but how to group or compare authors within

reviews. The concept of the “school” is just one such mode of grouping authors and mapping their influence, linking their names to works they did not produce and raising their visibility. The *Edinburgh Review*’s inaugural issue enacted this very process, employing the pretext of Southey’s *Thalaba the Destroyer* to review Wordsworth and Coleridge’s 1800 revision of the *Lyrical Ballads* (ER 1:1 [October 1802]). As the constructors of these careers, periodicals writers are acutely aware of the choices that are available to them: whether to notice new publications, how seriously to take their listed authors, how to link them with other published works.

Scott’s spectacular popular success, as well as his continued productivity, might seem like a boon to the book-reviewing periodicals, but they ultimately functioned as an attack on precisely this set of reviewing freedoms. I have already detailed how—in personalities that judged the author’s body or in the more sophisticated genre of the false death report—minor authors could be reviewed through the denial or disarticulation of their careers. But Walter Scott, both as himself and as the Author of Waverley, is different: a writer who is continually producing new and popular works cannot simply be dismissed. Such an author has an audience that anticipates each new work eagerly, one that actively imagines him to be writing *in the present moment*. A great living author sets up a structure of anticipation and reception that troubles the reviewer’s work: at any point judgment might need to be revised, deferred, or cancelled.

The first problematic aspect of Scott’s living authorship is his popularity. The name recognition he acquires both as Scott and pseudonymously as the Author of Waverley threatens to make the reviewer’s office irrelevant. His books are likely to have already been read before they are reviewed, thus making the usual reviewing strategies of excerpt and summary useless. As the *Quarterly Review* notes of Scott’s *Lady of the Lake*:

If the poem which we are not proceeding to examine were the production of an unknown or obscure author, our task would be short and easy. A simple outline of the plan, a

selection of the most striking beauties, with some examples of its defects, and some general remarks on the leading characters and incidents, would suffice to adjust its true rank in the scale of contemporary poetry, and amply satisfy ourselves and our readers. (*QR* 3:6 [May 1810]: 492)

In responding to a work that has not only been read and judged but also eagerly anticipated by its audience, this reviewer is wary of what pre-existing judgments and feelings readers might already be harboring:

[I]n reviewing the recent compositions of a distinguished and popular writer, it is not easy to preserve our minds in the same state of stedfast and sober neutrality; because, in the literary as well as in the political world, the appearance of every highly eminent character usually gives birth to two great parties, by one of which the most candid critic is liable to be biased. (*QR* 3:6 [May 1810]: 492)

Popularity in writing occasions the same polarizing reaction as politics, even among the supposedly neutral critics. One of the two parties created in the reception of the author is bound to sweep the critic up, and since such parties do not have to be based on actual politics the reviewer is at risk of running afoul of his readers.

This theory of the (great) living author's polarizing effects helps to explain why the major quarterlies took to circumventing aesthetic judgements with political ones. It serves to justify the savagely personal reviews explored my previous chapter. For both the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*, the review's audience is overtly defined through political allegiance (Whig and Tory, respectively). As such, politics represents its greatest point of common sympathy. In the critique of William Gifford, with which I opened, Hazlitt accuses: "The distinction between truth and falsehood you make no account of; you mind only the distinction between Whig and Tory" (1819, 4). Reviewing by political allegiance shocks readers outside the periodical's target audience, but—as the theory of polarizing greatness suggests—it may offer a less controversial route than reviewing based on differing theories of aesthetics. That is to say that, for the politically homogenous target audience of the review, political reviewing is a safer bet. It is less risky to attack Shelley for his association with a "miserable crew of atheists or pantheists" than to

challenge the inappropriateness of his “luxurious and ornate” yet “beautiful passages” (*QR* 21:42 [April 1819] 461).

But a great, popular author like Scott was conspicuously *not* subjected to such polarizing readings. The reviewer worried about alienating his readership by pronouncing too decisively on such an author. Scott’s gender, class status, and connection to the periodical publishing world were further bulwarks against such treatment. As the attack on Shelley suggests, class or gender alone could not fully protect one from politically-motivated reviewing, but they did prevent the jump to personality without some prior evidence of invitation or provocation.³¹ Scott profited from the ideal blend privilege and popularity that insulated a living author from the prevailing methods of judgement. And in response, his reviewers worked hard not to judge him *at all*.

Despite Scott’s exemplary status as a novelist, reviewers studiously avoided criticizing his works too strongly. As Ina Ferris has argued, Scott was constructed as a great novelist (the Author of *Waverley*) as part of a larger project endorsing a more “serious”, masculine novel (35). Indeed, Scott was almost immediately approached from an already-retrospective angle, one that assumed his greatness and downplayed criticism. Ferris outlines how his success and popularity were mythologized in the reviews: “within six years the *Waverley* Novels had achieved such authority and prestige that the moment of their entrance into the literary field was already legendary” (81). Scott himself was an active participant in this mythologization. As Michael Gamer argues, both his preface to *Waverley* and his 1818 *Quarterly* review of his own *Tales of My Landlord* insist on the originality of his project—defining a “new genre... consisting only and entirely of the words of the Author of *Waverley*” (2009, 508). Scott’s move in this review

³¹ In Shelley’s case, the provocation lay in his public avowals of atheism: both *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811) and the rumor of his registering himself as “atheos” in various hostel guest-books throughout Switzerland (reported in *QR* 18:36 [January 1818] 329).

paralleled that of his other reviewers: establishing the Author of *Waverley*'s greatness by measuring him only against himself.

Yet even on such a restricted terrain, the problem of polarizing judgement reappears. Book reviews of the Author of *Waverley* struggled to place the novels in a hierarchy, while still emphasizing their overall approval of the exemplary author. Brushing aside concerns about authorial decline or lapses in taste, these reviews constructed the Author of *Waverley* as a stable brand.³² Thus, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for example, laments the "difficult task for a Reviewer" of ranking the recently published *The Antiquary* below *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering* in the Author's oeuvre (*GM* 86:9 [June 1816] 521). In the *Quarterly Review* treatment of *Guy Mannering*, such rankings are delivered with utmost delicacy:

But though *Mannering* and *Waverley* be of the same species and by the same author, we are not surprised to find them of very different merit. Had they been equal, the second could hardly have pleased us as much as the first; but being absolutely inferior, it appears relatively much more so from the predilection which we entertain for its predecessor. We trust our respect for the talents of the unknown author has been so decidedly pronounced, that we may, with the greater freedom, express our opinion of his new attempt; and in placing *Mannering* far below *Waverley*, we may still pronounce it to be a work of considerable merit. (*QR* 12:24 [January 1815] 501-2)

The reviewer delivers a clear evaluation—*Guy Mannering* is not as good as *Waverley*—but still carefully cordons the Author of *Waverley* from the mass of other novelists. The reviewers attempt to walk an impossible line with this great author: exalting him above his contemporaries, keeping up their reputation for severity, and not acknowledging the fact that his works may be declining—either in quality or in popular opinion. Indeed, the dynamics of popular opinion came to pose the greatest problems.

³² Fiona Robertson outlines how criticism has overlooked the Gothic elements of Scott's works as a means of producing an image of his works as natural, healthy, and sane (21).

The affective mechanics of readerly anticipation and reception transform the reviewer's task from one of judgment to one of rehabilitation. As Scott himself described, there was an advantage to sending work out "unchristend": "The difference between the popularity or unpopularity of a work often depends on the reader's expectations being too much excited, or on his finding unexpected pleasure where there was not parade of promise" (1933, vol IV, 280). Popularity and success make the public more critical and the reviewer is forced to compensate. Consider, the *Edinburgh Review*'s treatment of *Marmion*:

There is a kind of right of primogeniture among books, as well as among men; and it is difficult for an author, who has obtained great fame by a first publication, not to appear to fall off in a second—especially if his original success could be imputed, in any degree, to the novelty of his plan of composition. The public is always indulgent to untried talents; and is even apt to exaggerate a little the value of what it receives without any previous expectation. But, for this advance of kindness it usually exacts a most usurious return in the end. When the poor author comes back, he is no longer received as a benefactor, but a debtor. In return for the credit it formerly gave him, the world now conceives that it has a just claim on him for excellence, and becomes impertinently scrupulous as to the quality of the coin in which it is to be paid. (*ER* 12:23 [April 1808] 1)

The reviewer must restrain his own tendencies as a critic in order to compensate for the reader's anticipation of the poem. The paired metaphors of family and debt strikingly contrast the critical and popular modes of reading as reading: professionals read for family, while the popular audience reads for debt.

For the reviewer, family provides an important metaphor for explaining the relationship between texts by the same author. Drawing on the rhetoric of copyright, it models the relationship between texts and authors on that between the patriarch and his children. Mark Rose has traced this understanding of authorship to the copyright debates that led up to the 1710 Statute of Anne. In one such missive, Daniel Defoe argued that: "A Book is the Author's Property, 'tis the Child of his Inventions, the Brat of his Brain [...] behold in this Christian Nation, these Children of our Heads are seiz'd, captivated, spirited away, and carry'd into Captivity, and there is none to

redeem them” (qtd. Rose, 38). For Rose, the claim of paternity deflects anxiety over the sale of the work and harkens back to “the notion of likeness more than of property, [...] consonant with the emergence of the individuated author in the patriarchal patronage society concerned with blood, lineage, and the dynastic principle that like engenders like” (Rose, 39). This dynastic view of the relationship between authors and texts is useful to the *Edinburgh* reviewer. Rather than invoking the more chronology- and development-focused idea of the biographic teleology—which would look at the order of the author’s publications to determine progress or decline—the dynastic model is synchronic. It emphasizes the similarities between the texts, each acting as an image of its father and a testament to the fertility of his mind. Under this model, even a minor production cannot be read as a diminishment of his achievement.

But rather than reading for family, as the reviewer does, the popular reader reads—or is assumed to read—for debt. This approach demands the complete interchangeability of the author’s works. By insisting on a mechanical coinage, the popular reader will inevitably denigrate and misjudge subsequent works. The popular reader is imagined here as more hostile to the living author than the critical reader because of the diminishing affect in his or her reactions:

[T]he comparative amount of his [the author’s] past and present merits can only be ascertained by the uncertain standard of his reader’s feelings; and these must always be less lively with regard to a second performance; which, with every other excellence of the first, must necessarily want the powerful recommendations of novelty and surprise, and, consequently, fall very far short of the effect produced by their strong cooperation. [...] [W]herever our impression of any work is favourable on the whole, its excellence is constantly exaggerated, in those vague and habituated recollections which form the basis of subsequent comparisons. We readily drop from our memory the dull and bad passages, and carry along with us the remembrance of those only which had afforded us delight. Thus when we take the merit of any favourite poem as a standard of comparison for some later production of the same author, we never take its true average merit, which is the only fair standard, but the merit of its most striking and memorable passages, which naturally stand forward in our recollection, and pass upon our hasty retrospect as just and characteristic specimens of the whole work. (*ER* 12:23 [April 1808] 1-2)

Correcting not only bad reading but fundamentally deficient memory, the reviewer must come to the defense of the popular living author. He is forced to recur to the uncritical mode of family resemblance and to insist on authorial consistency in place of any narrativization of the career. Like the living author, the family of works displays an equivocal relationship with time. This family does not have a future life or development, but is instead a set of children proving the fertility of the father: their number and variety is emphasized in place of their consistency or quality.

The family logic of reviewing essentially demoted the reviewers to the role of advertisers. Unexpectedly, brands function very much like dynasties.³³ As the *Waverley* novels multiply, reviewers began to track which characters the reader could essentially expect to see again, by identifying “family resemblances” between characters: “Old Edie is of the family of Meg Merrilees,—a younger brother, we confess, with less terror and energy, and more taste and gayety, but equally a poetical embellishment of a familiar character” (*ER* 28:55 [March 1817] 199) while Diana Vernon from *Rob Roy*, bears a “family likeness to the Flora of *Waverley*” (*ER* 29:58 [February 1818] 410). These family types construct the *Waverley* novels like a true series, in which the same characters recur in each installment. Creating consistency of character by collapsing Meg into Edie and Diana into Flora assures the readers of the stability of the brand they are purchasing.

³³ Contemplating his anonymous publications in 1809, Walter Scott outlines a way to secretly signal his authorship in a letter to John Murray. Yoking his brand with his family heritage, Scott devises a family symbol that will encode an anagram of his name and allow him to signal authorship even in anonymous works, making it possible to reassemble his corpus once the code is disclosed: “I have published many unauthenticated books as you know & may probably bring forward many more. Now I wish to have it in my power to place in a few copies of each a decisive mark of appropriation. I have chosen for this purpose a device borne by a Champion of my name in a tournament at Stirling. It was a gate & portcullis with the mottoe CLAUSUS TUTUE ERO. I have it engraved on a seal as you may remark on the enclosure but it is done in a most blackguard stile—Now what I want is to have this same gate-way & this same portcullis & this same mottoe of *Clausus Tutus Ero* which is an anagram of *Walterus Scotus* (taking two single U’s for the W) cut upon wood in the most elegant manner so as to make a small vignette capable of being applied to a few copies of very work which I either write or publish.” (1933, vol II, 168-9)

At the limit, reviewing the Author of *Waverley* is presented as an escape from criticism entirely. In the *Edinburgh Review* handling of *Rob Roy*, the reviewer appeals to the uncontroversiality of the Author of *Waverley*'s popularity as a way of providing relief from the usually combative tone of reviews:

This is not so good, perhaps, as some others of the family;—but it is better than any thing else; and has a charm and a spirit about it that draws us irresistibly away from our graver works of politics and science, to expatiate upon that which every body understands and agrees in; and after setting us diligently to read over again what we had scarce finished reading, leaves us no choice but to tell our readers what they know already, and to persuade them of that of which they are most intimately convinced. (*ER* 29:58 [February 1818] 403)

In writing what will be confessedly an unnecessary or even a pointless review, the reviewer treats Scott less as a duty to review than as a break from both the bad novelists that will need to be chastised and the heavier works of politics and science that will need to be reviewed for information. Stressing the uncontroversiality of Scott's success works to downplay concerns about the declining quality of his novels—concern that the younger members of the literary family may not live up to the fame of the patriarch. As a challenge to reviewer's authority, Scott's popularity forces periodicals to abandon their critical task in favor of rehabilitation of reputation, advertising, or sheer escape.

Along with his popularity, Scott's *productivity* contributed to the unease provoked by a great living author. Concern over productivity was common during the Romantic period. Southey's youthful productivity, indeed, made him a whipping boy for the early *Edinburgh Review*:

An unlucky facility in rhyming has betrayed many poets into inexcusable negligences; and we really fear that the great easiness of that loose and colloquial blank verse, in which Mr Southey has chosen to compose, will one day be the ruin of him. [...] As he has always plenty of good words, he never pauses to look for exquisite ones: and, rendered confident by the consciousness of his fluency, he sets down the first view that presents itself, of an image or sentiment, without waiting to determine whether it be the most striking or advantageous. (*ER* 7:13 [October 1805] 4)

Such representations of productivity as laziness, mediocrity, and femininity are what Ina Ferris is referencing when she argues that Scott's productivity had to be rebranded by his reviewers: "Where the prolixity of the ordinary novel signaled a lack of discipline and art, of education and knowledge, the prolixity of a Waverley Novel becomes the index of generosity, abundance, and gentlemanly ease" (242). While Scott's pace may have been no more excessive than Southey's, his popularity shielded him from receiving the same sort of dismissal. Nevertheless, the mandate of the major quarterlies themselves was challenged by their inability to keep up with him. Both as the poet Scott and the Author of Waverley, his rate of publication was considered remarkable. Since he could not be ignored or dismissed as sloppy, the reviews were forced to confront the problems posed by his pace. As the *Edinburgh Reviewer* complains in the January 1820 review of *Ivanhoe*:

Such an author would require a review to himself—and one too of swifter than a quarterly recurrence; and accordingly, we have long since acknowledge our inability to keep up with him, and fairly renounced the task of keeping a regular account of his successive publications; contenting ourselves with greeting him now and then in the pauses of his brilliant career, and casting, when we do meet, a hurried glance over the wide field he has traversed since we met before. (*ER* 33:65 [January 1820] 2)

By outpacing the quarterly publication model, the Author of Waverley is not merely publishing too often—he threatens the *Edinburgh's* reputation for selectivity. This is not to say that he literally publishes so often that a quarterly cannot cover him (i.e. more often than every three months), but rather, often enough that a *selective* quarterly cannot review each of his books without essentially dedicating their periodical to him and giving him "a Review to himself". The *Edinburgh Review* did, in fact, end up abandoning the project of responding to books by "Walter Scott" and by the "Author of Waverley". From the former they reviewed *Marmion*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and *Don Roderick*; or, less than half of his poetry published during the review's existence. Of the latter, they addressed *Waverley*, *Tales of My Landlord*, *Rob Roy*, and *Ivanhoe*; representing only twenty percent of the 1814-1829 stretch, and with the 1820 *Ivanhoe* review

being the last one Scott received. But this reticence was not limited to the *Edinburgh Review*. When it came to the Author of Waverley, the *Quarterly Review* proved more dedicated, but still reviewed only thirty-five percent of his novels as they came out.³⁴ Despite their greater number of opportunities for coverage, the monthly literary reviews and magazines did not pay much more attention to the Author of Waverley. In a survey of the eight monthly periodicals that mentioned the Author of Waverley the most, and taking into account their respective periods of activity, on average just shy of a third of his novels were reviewed.³⁵ It seems that no matter what periodical one wrote for, the prominence of the Author of Waverley as greatest novelist became tiresome.

Praise of such a productive author was conceived of as dangerous as well as tiresome. The Romantic idea of the literary “school” theorized the danger that such living authors represented. The Author of Waverley figured prominently in reviews of other living authors, with reviewers tracking the extent of his influence. Reviewers in the Romantic period were concerned not only with the popularity of particular authors or books but also their tendency to *induce* the production of more of the same. Living authors were problematic not just because of the unfolding of their own careers, but because of the troublesome productions of their imitators and fans. In my first chapter, I examined the *Edinburgh Review*’s construction of the Lake School and, in my second, *Blackwood’s* attacks on “The Cockney School”; in each case a periodical mapped the social groups behind the books under review. Later uses of the school concept extend it beyond personal acquaintance to sociological types. For instance, the *Quarterly Review*

³⁴ *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *The Pirate*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *Peveril of the Peak*, and a collective review of *Rob Roy*, *Tales of My Landlord*, *The Abbot*, *The Monastery*, *Ivanhoe*, and *Kenilworth* in October 1821.

³⁵ *Monthly Magazine* (1814-1829): 2/20 novels reviewed; *Gentleman’s Magazine* (1814-1829): 12/20 novels reviewed; *British Critic* (1814-1829): 4/20 novels reviewed; *Eclectic Review* (1814-1829): 4/20 novels reviewed; *New Monthly Magazine* (1814-1829): 6/20 novels reviewed; *Blackwood’s Magazine* (1817-1829): 5/16 novels reviewed; *London Magazine* (1820-1829): 5/12 novels reviewed; *Edinburgh Magazine* (1814-1826): 8/17 novels reviewed.

identifies the “School of Ennui”, in which the man of leisure is lured into publication by a failure to recognize that the praise he gets for his poetry is not true praise, but a sort of payment for his hospitality:

The pupil of the School of Ennui is usually guiltless, in his outset, of any designs upon the attention of the public: but his little performances accumulate by degrees; he reads them, perhaps, repeatedly, in solitude, and, of course, before a candid auditor; he finds in them a ‘sweetness,’ which he is unwilling to waste ‘on the desert air;’ he indulges a good-natured friend with a recital; and his good-natured friend (although, perchance, he earns his dinner as hardly as Mat at the table of Sir Topaz) can scarcely refuse, with decency, to pay for the port with praise: thus encouraged, by a person of the most unequivocal judgment and sincerity, the author deliberates no longer—he sends for a printer, rushes into the jaws of the press. (*QR* 3:5 [February 1810] 43-4)

Alternately *Blackwood’s* detects the inverse situation in the “Leg of Mutton School of Poetry”, in which poets of lower class write poems to the patrons who pay for their dinner: “The chief constellations in this poetical firmament, consist of led captains and clerical hangers-on, whose pleasure and whose business it is to celebrate in tuneful verse the virtues of some angelic patron, who keeps a good table, and has interest with the archbishop, or the India House” (*BEM* 9 [June 1821] 346). In both cases, “schools” serve to map the way living authors relate to one another at the pre-publication stage and constitute the single most threatening aspect of living authorship.

Scott, too, was seen as the potential founder of a school. Despite his exalted position, reviewers examined his works in detail because of their potential influence on other, weaker, authors. Thus in devoting time to *Marmion*, the *Edinburgh Review* was willing to risk the reader’s “annoyance” at a review of a book they have already read because “we cannot help considering it as the foundation of a new school” (*ER* 12:23 [April 1808] 34). This school is deserving of attention and dangerous, the reviewer claims, because it is just as likely to canonize the bad attributes of Scott’s writing as the good:

[I]f, by the help of the good parts of his poems, he succeeds in suborning the verdict of the public in favour of the bad parts also, and establishes an indiscriminate taste for chivalrous legends and romances in irregular rhyme, he may depend upon having as many

copyists as Mrs Radcliffe or Schiller, and upon becoming the founder of a new schism in the catholic poetical church, for which, in spite of all our exertions, there will probably be no cure, but in the extravagance of the last and lowest of its followers. (*ER* 12:23 [April 1808] 34)

The school, as a problem, is uniquely tied to the living author. When identifying schools, periodicals did not focus on the influence exerted by the dead, which was seen as less powerful and less problematic. It was living authors whose style, social ties, and success in drawing public attention threatened wholesale imitation of both good parts and bad. While to be announced the head of a school was certainly an acknowledgement of success and influence, it also carried with it the trappings of a negative celebrity culture, “alienat[ing] the individual from his or her public image” (Goldsmith, 30).

For the *Quarterly Review*, the problem of imitation and the possibility of a Scott school came to dominate the evaluation of his poetry. It ceased to review Scott’s named works and shifted focus to reviewing imitations and parodies of his work. Thus, despite evident opportunity to discover the author, it reviewed his anonymous *The Bridal of Triermain* in the July 1813 number as though it were an imitation. Refusing to reveal the secret of the anonymously published work, it uses the fiction of imitation as a means of evaluating the poem and escaping some of the now-familiar problems posed by the living author. In this review, the problem of following up one’s own success is reframed as a problem of imitation:

To attempt a *serious* imitation of the most popular living poet; and this imitation, not a short fragment, in which all his peculiarities might with comparatively little difficulty be concentrated, but a long and complete work; with plot, character, and machinery entirely new; and with no manner of resemblance therefore to a *parody* on any production of the original author;—this must be acknowledged an attempt of no timid daring, and I cannot be uninteresting to inquire if its execution be equal to the boldness of its conception. (*QR* 9:18 [July 1813] 481)

Scott here, does not have to live up to his original production so much as imitate himself, successfully. His choice to publish anonymously allows the reviewer to discount the problems of great living author—the pressure of reception patterns and their polarizing influence on the public

can be side-stepped by respecting his anonymous publication, and reviewing the book as though it were the production of an unknown:

The fate of this work must depend on its own merits; for it is not borne up by any of the adventitious circumstances that frequently contribute to literary success. It is ushered into the world, as we have already observed, in the most modest guise [ie anonymously]; and the author, we believe, is entirely unknown. Should it fail altogether of a favourable reception, we shall be disposed to abate something of the indignation which we have occasionally expressed against the extravagant gaudiness of modern publications, and imagine that there are readers whose suffrages are not to be obtained by a work without a name. (*QR* 9:18 [July 1813] 497)

But while self-imitation may allow for the manipulation of public expectations, more generalized imitation is altogether more sinister. A review of Hodson's *Wallace: or the Fight of Falkirk*, stresses how imitation results in the writer aping the most accessible aspects of the target style rather than its best:

Unfortunately, the great majority of this numerous family [imitative authors], seldom exert themselves to acquire those qualities of their prototypes which possess an independent and intrinsic value, but content their ambition with the pursuit of such peculiarities as are of easy attainment, and which nothing but the mass of excellence throughout which they are sparingly diffused, could render pardonable, or even tolerable in the original compositions. (*QR* 3:5 [February 1810] 63)

Imitation boils down the original, and the imperfections are further concentrated in this derivative work. For this reviewer, this is especially a problem when it comes to the publications of living authors: "In all this, though there is much of absurdity, there is little mischief: but when a living author is thus imitated, injustice is added to folly; and the practice calls for more serious notice and reprobation" (*QR* 3:5 [February 1810] 63). Problematically, imitation threatens to amplify the faults of the original, and forces the critic to be more severe, *in general*—even on the original author's stronger production:

Now, however, (such is the prevailing frenzy of the times,) if a poem on its first appearance be received with any degree of applause, a swarm of feeble copyists instantly seize upon its most prominent defects; and a number of compositions are brought forward, which, though dictated by admiration, are in fact so many grave and solemn travesties of the original performance. Hence it is no longer sufficient, as heretofore, to

place the beauties of a work of genius in one scale, and the defects in the other, and decide according to the inclination of the balance: the critic is farther compelled, by an imperious sense of duty, to throw in, as a makeweight to the latter, all the consequences of which, as examples, they are likely to be productive. (*QR* 3:5 [February 1810] 64)

The problem of provoking imitations in other writers means that the original author's work cannot stand on its own but must be read as a model of what other writers *might do* with its techniques and materials. It has to be judged by what its most debased or travestied version might look like. At the limit, a work must be read for its own satire because no matter how well-intentioned an imitation might be, successful works will ultimately give rise to debased, potentially pernicious versions of themselves. According to this theory, the problem of imitation, "schools", or coterie forces the critic to anticipate the debasement of the text and makes the reviewers more savage. A defect in the social fabric outside the review must be made up within its pages. Because too many people are publishing, there is a need to be harsher on those who *do* deserve to publish.³⁶

This greatest problem of the living author extends well beyond the exemplary case of Scott. This threat of contagion through imitation and schools is notable in reviews of Hunt, Coleridge, and Byron as well, revealing the extent to which a living author's influence is used to justify severer, often more personal, reviews.³⁷ Beyond just the Scott school, the school concept

³⁶ Scott himself would recapitulate the terms of the "schools" problem in his discussion of Radcliffe's imitators in the *Lives of the Novelists*: "Mrs. Radcliffe, as an author, has the most decided claim to take her place among the favoured few, who have been distinguished as the founders of a class, or school. She led the way in a peculiar style of composition, affecting powerfully the mind of the reader, which has since been attempted by many, but in which no one has attained or approached the excellencies of the original inventor" (1825, 211). Imitation, however, picked up not on the style of her writing but the mechanical elements of her tales: "It shows, therefore, the excellence and power of Mrs. Radcliffe's genius, that she was able three times to bring back her readers, with fresh appetite, to a banquet of the same description; while of her numerous imitators, who rang the changes upon old castles and forests, and "antres dire," scarcely one attracted attention" (1825, 218).

³⁷ In a January 1818 review of Hunt's *Foliage*, the *Quarterly Review* stresses that the problem with schools lies in how the disciples take the matter even further than the initiator: "There are many obvious reasons why the author of a dangerous moral tenet may himself escape the danger—Epicurus, we believe, did so; but they who have neither the intellectual pride of a first discovery to compensate them for self-restriction,

ties together not only the living author and his social group, but eventually, the author's body and personality. For instance, the "Wild School", coined in a review of *Christabel*, recategorizes Coleridge from his original position among the Lakers into a new school that incorporates Byron. Coleridge is demoted out of the already-degraded Lake School:

The other productions of the Lake School have generally exhibited talents thrown away upon subjects so mean, that no power of genius could ennoble them; or perverted and rendered useless by a false theory of poetical composition. But even in the worst of them, if we except the White Doe of Mr Wordsworth and some of the laureate odes, there were always some gleams of feeling or fancy. But the thing now before us, is utterly destitute of value. (*ER* 27:53 [September 1816] 66)

Instead he is incorporated into a "new school, or, as they may be termed, the wild or lawless poets," in which "[m]uch of the art [...] consists in sudden transitions—opening eagerly upon some topic, and then flying from it immediately. This indeed is known to the medical men, who not unfrequently have the care of them, as an unerring symptom" (*ER* 27:53 [September 1816]

nor the ardent anxiety for reputation of an infant sect to support them against their own principle, will certainly soon push it, as the Epicureans did, to its legitimate consequences, all impurity and all impiety." (*QR* 18:36 [January 1818] 327) By identifying the Cockneys as a new group of Epicureans, the *Quarterly Review* paints Hunt as the less pernicious head of a school. The disordered social group around him, then stands in in this review for his own faults. By being unwilling to outright name Shelley (through the ostensible desire to avoid bringing any more attention to him, but also perhaps to dodge libel charges) they produce a review in which Shelley's misdeeds are comingled with Hunts: "Mr. Hunt may flatter himself with possessing a finer eye, and a warmer feeling for the loveliness of nature, or congratulate himself on the philosophic freedom with which he follows her impulses—he may look upon us and all who differ from him as dull creatures, who have no right to judge of his privileged opinions. Our path indeed may be a plain and beaten one, but at least it keeps us from some things, that seem to be grievous errors—new names and specious declamations do not easily deceive us. We should not, for instance, commend as singularly amiable the receiving great and unmerited favours to be returned with venomous and almost frantic hatred [ungrammatical- sic]; we are at a loss for the decency which rails at marriage, or the honour which pollutes it; and we have still a reluctance to condemn as a low prejudice the mysterious feeling of separation, which consecrates, and draws to closer intimacy the communion of brothers and sisters. We may be very narrow-minded, but we look upon it still as somewhat dishonourable to have been expelled from a University for the monstrous absurdity of a 'mathematical demonstration of the non-existence of a God:' according to our understandings, it is not proof of a very affectionate heart to break that of a wife by cruelty and infidelity; and if we were told of a man, who, placed on a wild rock among the clouds, yet even in that height surrounded by a loftier amphitheatre of spirelike mountains, hanging over a valley of eternal ice and snow, where the roar of mighty waterfalls was at times unheeded from the hollow and more appalling thunder of the deep and unseen avalanche,—if we were told of a man who, thus witnessing the sublimest assemblage of natural objects, should retire to the cabin near, and write ['atheist' in Greek] after his name in the album, we hope our own feeling would be pity rather than disgust; but we should think it imbecility indeed to court that man's friendship, or to celebrate his intellect or his heart as the wisest and warmest of the age." (*QR* 18:36 [January 1818] 328-9)

59-60). The medicalization of the school initiates a personality circuit back to the authorial body, with charges against Coleridge and Byron's sanity implied by the review. While the "wild or lawless" terminology may seem vague, representing more a spirit of rebellion rather than an organized "school", the reviewer is quick to emphasize the personal relationships between the poets that justify the school terminology. He begins the review by pointing to the endorsement from Lord Byron in the poem's advertisement. Poetic alliances of this nature invite suspicion:

[W]e are a little inclined to doubt the value of the praise which one poet lends another. It seems now-a-days to be the practice of that once irritable race to laud each other without bounds; and one can hardly avoid suspecting, that what is thus lavishly advanced may be laid out with a view to being repaid with interest. (*ER* 27:53 [September 1816] 58-9)

By remaining skeptical of authorial relationships and authorial bodies, the reviewer insists on the danger of the school. The school is about living bodies relating to each other in an unregulated manner—acting out of self-interest, or self-indulgence. Such reviews use the threat of the school as a way to master the author, offering personal revelations rather than taking interest in the always-unfolding career.

By reviewing the poetry and novels of a great living author like Scott, periodicals were forced to confront the insufficiency of techniques like personality and false death reports, with which they had so ably managed the minor author. The reviewers responded to the anticipation and deferred judgment occasioned by living authorship by canonizing, avoiding, or advertising the great living author. They produced narratives that blamed the living author for forcing them to be less critical in some instances, and more critical at others. By linking living authors back to concerns about schools and imitations, they collapsed living authors with private persons, policing the way that authors relate to one another behind the scenes. Greatness, it turns out, was no insulation from the reviewer's oversight, and livingness was the author's most fundamental transgression.

IV: The “Living Authors” pantheon and the personal public domain

From the 1802 founding of the *Edinburgh Review* through to the 1820s, the book-reviewing project that dominated middle-class literary periodicals led them to confront the living author as a frustrating figure. Whether a minor player or a living great, these authors invited an on-going process of evaluation and narrativization that stretched the critical project to its conceptual limits. Their presence revealed an uncomfortable but ignored truth—that criticism was more equipped to deal with the dead. By the 1820s, literary magazines began to seek a systematic solution to this issue—producing a pantheon of living authors in an unfolding, serial form. To close, I will consider two such projects: the *London Magazine*’s “Living Authors” series and Hazlitt’s series of periodical contributions that would later be reprinted as *The Spirit of the Age*.³⁸ This pair of projects stems from the same source. The *London Magazine*’s series was penned primarily by its editor John Scott, with other contributors taking up the task after his untimely death. Hazlitt’s *Spirit of the Age* project emerges from the collapse of this earlier series—he contributed the *London*’s fifth number on Crabbe, reusing the material in his own, later work. Both projects, then, descend from the *London*’s design of a systematic survey, a portrait of living authorship that would set aside the responsiveness of the book review in favor of a more coherent structure. Both series redeployed many of the same author-managing strategies we have seen in the previous pages, making use of personality, death, and counterfactual author functions in order to corral their subjects. In their form, however, they illustrate the intimate connection between periodicity and living authorship, attempting to mobilize the format of the periodical to better respond to the condition of livingness.

³⁸ The essays that were later published in *The Spirit of the Age* appeared predominantly in the *New Monthly Magazine*, but also in the *London*.

The *London Magazine*'s "Living Authors" is the first sustained attempt to construct such a series, and its failure is illustrative of the difficulties of such a project. The series ran from 1820-1821 and covered Scott (as the "Author of the Scotch Novels"), Wordsworth, Godwin ("chiefly as a Writer of Novels"), Byron, and Crabbe.³⁹ Although brief, the list of authors included in the series indicates a safe, predictable approach. The list emphasizes established fame and is rather conservative. Godwin may be the only politically surprising inclusion, but the portrait truncates his author-function, representing him only as a novelist. In fact, the *London Magazine* series prioritizes *unpublishing* authors over more active ones who would be more likely to be discussed by book reviews. The choice of George Crabbe as the final installment of the series is telling. Crabbe's lack of productivity as a poet was noted as early as 1808, when the publication of *Poems* after a 22-years was greeted "with the same sort of feeling that would be excited by tidings of an ancient friend, whom we no longer expected to hear of in this world" (*ER* 12:23 [April 1808] 131). After Crabbe published *The Borough* in 1812, he switched to prose tales, allowing living-author accounts that treated him as a poet to approach him as though he were dead. Just as it circumscribed Godwin as a novelist, the *London Magazine* cancelled Crabbe's living status:

He is not a philosopher, but a sophist, and a misanthrope in verse: a namby-pamby Mandeville, a Malthus turned metrical romancer. [...] He is set down, perhaps, as he thinks, in a small curacy for life, and he takes his revenge by imprisoning the reader's imagination in luckless verse. (*LM* 1:17 [May 1821] 486)

Crabbe's lack of professional future ("set down in a small curacy for life") combines with Hazlitt's dismissal of the *Tales* in order to construct him as an author who is silenced in life. Crabbe is still living, but not likely to make any further additions to his corpus that could trouble

³⁹ The series consists of: "Living Authors: (Being a Series of Critical Sketches.) No I: The Author of the Scotch Novels." (*LM* 1:1 [January 1820]); [No. II] "Living Authors. Wordsworth." (*LM* 1:3 [March 1820]); "Living Authors. No. III. Godwin—Chiefly as a Writer of Novels." (*LM* 1:8 [August 1820]); "Living Authors. No. IV. Lord Byron." (*LM* 1:13 [January 1821]); "Living Authors. No. V. Crabbe." (*LM* 1:17 [May 1821]); [end: "Continuation of Dr. Johnson's Lives of the Poets"] (*LM* 1:20 [August 1821])

the critical narrative. He will produce only static verse to reflect his static living situation. Crabbe represents the living author as he is most comfortable for the critic: one who is dead in all but fact.

In Hazlitt's later series, Godwin emerges as another example of the silent or unpublishing author. He provides an occasion through which the definition of the living author can be stabilized:

Mr. Godwin, during his lifetime, has secured to himself the triumphs and the mortifications of an extreme notoriety and a sort of posthumous fame [...] Mr. Godwin's person is not known, he is not pointed out in the street, his conversation is not courted, his opinions are not asked, he is at the head of no cabal, he belongs to no party in the State, he has no train of admirers, no one thinks it worth his while even to traduce and vilify him [...] he is to all ordinary intents and purposes dead and buried; but the author of *Political Justice* and of *Caleb Williams* can never die, his name is an abstraction in letters, his works are standard in the history of intellect. He is thought of now like any eminent writer of a hundred-and-fifty years ago. (2004, 105).

Because Godwin is essentially treated as dead while he is still living, what he *lacks* is indicative of what it means to be alive. Despite the fact that the author of *Caleb Williams* is “immortal”, Godwin himself is all but dead. Under negation, Hazlitt lists the *true* attributes of the living author: Godwin is not recognized in the street, he is not sought out by the public or the state, no coterie gathers around him, and the periodicals no longer see the point of attacking him. As a short-list of living-author attributes, this sketch captures the troublesome elements of living authorship that have dominated this chapter—political allegiance, social group, the body, and—of course—new books.

The *London Magazine* “Living Authors” series was stillborn, running to only five numbers and never moving beyond a set of predictable selections. In fact, its omissions are far more revelatory of its investments than its inclusions. In the issue for July 1820, the magazine announced the forthcoming third number of the series at the head of a review of Leigh Hunt—an author who could well merit inclusion on his own account. The editor, John Scott, explains:

Our series of Living Authors, of which No. 3, will appear in our next Number,—is to be understood as expressing the sentiments of this Magazine on contemporaneous writers. Mr. Hunt will find a place in it; but in the mean time we are happy to insert the following paper from a Correspondent, who has taken, we think, a just view of the *merits* of Mr. Hunt's poetry. (*LM* 1:7 [July 1820] 45)

Hunt occupies an interesting position: imminently deserving of inclusion in the series, but unworthy of receiving it out of turn. He cannot be included until existing critical hierarchies have been paid their dues. The format of the “Living Authors” series borrowed from the serial model of the canonizing reprint edition. Serial editions from the *Novelist's Magazine* (1780-1788) to the Walter Scott-selected *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* (1821-1824) permitted their editors to select or revise canons of British literature (Gamer 2009, 504). In making a similar move with living authors, the *London Magazine* series attempted to construct a double temporality of the present in which the unfolding of the series according to the appropriate order of importance would approach as nearly as possible the responsiveness of book reviewing, without stepping into it. Thus, Leigh Hunt finds himself in July 1820, trapped in a space of suspension—“the mean time” before he can be included in the series. Caught between canonizing in the proper order and responding to new publications, the *London Magazine* draws awkward attention to this temporal disjuncture. Its list of chosen authors is simultaneously new and out of date.

The *London* “Living Authors” series could be said to underline the issue of copyright, emphasizing its role in the creation of literary canons. No reprint of Wordsworth, Scott, or Byron can yet be produced without their (or their publisher's) permission, and thus the only way this particular pantheon can be assembled is through the depiction of their lives and character. Authorial biography, rather than being constructed after death, as part of projects like Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, is instead part of the public domain—that which the *London Magazine* can draw on to recount literary history before its achievement in death. The living authors series

valorizes the personal not for its own sake but as a stand-in for reprinting—an alternative that only the periodical can offer.

Hazlitt's later series, which appeared partly as "Spirits of the Age" in the *New Monthly Magazine*, did not acquire its more familiar form until its book publication in 1825. As James Chandler notes, the singular book title—*The Spirit of the Age*—misrepresents Hazlitt's emphasis on the variability of both individuals and parties, identifying the diverse figures of Wordsworth and Scott, and also William Gifford and Francis Jeffrey, as representatives of the spirit of the age (106 passim). Additionally, the first and second English editions featured a slightly different selection and arrangement of portraits—suggesting that a strict architecture was not of central importance to Hazlitt's project. This looseness of arrangement marks *The Spirit of the Age*'s main departure from the *London*'s "Living Authors" series. While both projects attempt to produce a cohesive portrait of the living authors of their contemporary moment, Hazlitt eschews the hierarchical serial form. Instead, his use of periodical publication is diffuse and his assembly of the book form is flexible—in both cases, he produces not a settled list, but a kaleidoscopic set of comparisons. The diffusive quality of periodical work, along with a flexible project of reprinting, allows Hazlitt to construct his image of the contemporary outside of both copyright restrictions and hierarchical organization. His phenomenal success in this project—*The Spirit of the Age* was his best-selling work—testifies to the strengths of the periodical medium in representing living authorship.

The periodical, as a special space for the elaboration and performance of the living author, would be turned to rich account by the other adepts of the late-Romantic press. In the following chapter, we will follow Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey, James Hogg, Thomas Wainewright, John Wilson, and John Gibson Lockhart as they claim the mantle of living authorship for themselves and make the periodical its true element.

Chapter 4: Persona and the Performance of Living

Christopher North, fictitious editor of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, commented on the cant of literary production in the Romantic period: "Shew me any production of genius, written in our time, which does not contain what they pretend to abhor" (*BEM* 11:61 [March 1822] 374). This chapter will investigate how this particular paradox bears on the concept of the living author and its place in the periodical. Returning to a set of texts perhaps more familiar to the student of Romanticism—the periodicals writings of Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey, James Hogg, John Wilson, and John Gibson Lockhart—I will argue that the heyday of the Romantic literary magazine (1817-1830s) was the inflection point at which periodical writers internalized their own culture and took on the mantle of living authors for themselves. Or, to paraphrase North, by the 1820s periodicals had come to contain precisely the performances of living authorship that they elsewhere attacked and disdained. Schooled by, and often participants in, the book reviewing culture that had predominated since the *Edinburgh Review*, these writers were well aware of the problematic rhetoric surrounding living authors. They understood the mechanics of personalities—indeed, they would produce many themselves—and incorporated the threat of such attacks into their own performances of authorship. This chapter will center on the moment when periodical writers represent themselves as authors, embracing "personality" and living authorship as means to cement their own literary and personal identities. Rather than "transcending" the culture of personality, as Kim Wheatley has argued, they have adapted to it, turning its conventions to the purpose of self-creation (2013, 1).

The great literary magazines of the 1820s have formed the touchstone for critical investigation into Romantic periodical culture. Recent work by Kim Wheatley, Richard Cronin, Mark Parker, David Stewart, and David Minden Higgins has relied on a "post-Waterloo"

periodization that isolates the work of late Romantic literary magazines such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and the *London Magazine* from the period of the major quarterlies (1802-1817). I believe this periodization has produced a blindspot with regards to the status of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. While the political motivation behind the founding of *Blackwood's* is well established—with Wheatley outlining how it would attempt to reanimate “the “sprightly” rhetoric of the two major quarterlies” from an ultra-Tory perspective (2003, 3)—a prevailing sense persists that “there was nothing else quite like *Blackwood's*” (Morrison and Roberts, 1). In this chapter I will propose one way of putting the contradictory and chaotic contents of this magazine into conversation with the major quarterlies as well as with its peer the *London*. Rather than focusing on the political investments that prompted attacks on the Cockney School or Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, I will propose the periodical *persona* as the element which explains how these magazines stem from and incorporate the book-reviewer's obsession with personality and living authors.

I: Defining Periodical Persona

Peter Murphy's reading of the dangerous disjuncture between texts and realities in *Blackwood's Magazine*—“Impersonation and Authorship in Romantic Britain”—remains one of the most succinct and often-quoted descriptions of the problems of magazine authorship at the end of the Romantic period. He has argued that the deadly duel between the editor of the *London Magazine*, John Scott, and James Christie, the second of *Blackwood's Magazine's* John Gibson Lockhart, was “an assertion of coherence” between “two worlds”: the worlds of public identity and of discourse (625). It was an assertion, he argues, that grew out of *Blackwood's* “nearly obsessive interest in the interaction, attachment and slippage between authors (published names) and persons (bodies indicated by names)” (626). Murphy's reading of this dramatic “parable” has served as an important touchstone for critics interested in the problems of the periodical world,

but within the scope of this larger study, it is necessary to challenge the narrative he tells and the core distinction on which it relies. Murphy does not fully explain the source of this periodical's "nearly obsessive interest" in authors and persons; in his treatment, *Blackwood's* appears to be the exceptional experiment of some very brilliant, but emphatically challenged, young men. As Kim Wheatley has insisted, however, *Blackwood's* did not invent but "intensif[ied] the virulence inherited from the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*" and went "a step further than the quarterlies in embracing the practice of character assassination" (2013, 85). In the preceding chapters, I have argued along this line: that the personality culture for which *Blackwood's* is famed first was established by the quarterly book reviewers and can be best understood as part of a wider concern with living authors. *Blackwood's* is not an aberration, but a natural outgrowth of periodical culture and the tension between authors and persons that Murphy notes as a feature of periodical literature. The play between them taps into anxieties about surplus authors and the slippery living author. More fundamentally, the terms of tension that Murphy identifies can now benefit from a more nuanced exploration: his distinction between authors (as published names) and persons (as bodies indicated by names) may be *too* clear to capture the process of mutual definition that the terms were undergoing at the time. As I will explore in this chapter, the personae in which magazines like *Blackwood's* specialize actually merge the characteristics of the author and person. Periodical personae set up the author as *the* model of exemplary personhood.

Murphy's argument falters when he falls into a project of categorization that is set up to fail by *Blackwood's* dedication to inconsistency. As he explores the different levels of reality and fiction that occur in different articles and allusions, he develops a cluttered taxonomy to describe them. Murphy elaborates a confusing continuum of realness: he uses the term "pseudo-person" to describe a contributor whose name is a pseudonym and who is created and used "almost exclusively" by a single person (632). In contrast to what he calls the "polite fiction" of the

pseudonym, it is “an impolite fiction, a pseudo-person, not tethered to a body” (638). Elsewhere on the continuum we find “pseudonym[s] on the way to being pseudo-person[s]” as well as the “simple” pseudonym (which obscures a stable body) and the entirely fictional character (for example, he cites “Winnifred Jenkins, a character from *Humphery Clinker* who appears as a contributor to the magazine”) (633). This continuum is confusing for two reasons: Firstly, it struggles to plot its terms on the dual axes of names and bodies simultaneously and, additionally, it is shooting at a moving target. Because these characters, pseudonyms, and pseudo-persons are in the process of unfolding in the magazine, they are not consistent from month to month and their archive is not, probably cannot, be defined.

For this reason, I will propose that we avoid taxonomizing the degree of realness behind these sorts of names or publishing entities and embrace the inconsistency that is characteristic of periodical writing. The effort to taxonomize runs counter to the spirit of the *Blackwood's* game—and periodical culture more generally—and results in distinctions that may prove impossible to stabilize. Instead, I will put forward the following definition of a single term, *persona*, that I will use to address the phenomenon of slippage between fiction and reality that Murphy has identified. A periodical or magazine persona is a publishing (contributing) entity, identified by a name and/or an epithet, that draws on both the conventions of fictionality and referentiality in its deployment. Periodical personae are most distinctive for being self-conscious: produced through and as reflections on their own authorship. That is to say, authorship and its practices are part of the diegesis of periodical persona. These are the personae of authors, editors, contributors—the descendants of Mr. Spectator, although not perhaps entirely in the legitimate line.

Here, I find it necessary to borrow a term from Catherine Gallagher – *fictionality* – to describe the potent mix of constructedness and referentiality residing in the periodical persona. In her rereading of the history of the novel, “fictionality” enters the scene at precisely the point

when novels differentiate themselves from plausible historical narratives and scandal (345). In appropriating the term to describe a definitive aspect of Romantic periodical culture, I wish to foreground the codes by which the fictionality of periodical work—as well as novels—was established. A central element is the proper name. Novelistic names, as Gallagher points out, differ from romance names in terms of their ordinariness, but more importantly, they differ from real names in terms of their orthography: as she explains “individual references at the time were normally signed either through initials and blanks [...] or by pseudonyms” (352). The conventions of naming in the Romantic period retain this pattern: “Lord B----” is a potentially libelous allusion to Lord Byron, whereas “Lord Ruthven” is a less prosecutable allusion, and “Childe Harold” at least attempts to signal non-referentiality such that taking him as literally representing Byron is, no matter how widespread, compelling, or productive a move, also always some kind of misreading.⁴⁰

In the case of periodical personae, multiple, often conflicting, indications of fictionality and referentiality are invoked. Thus “Sylvanus Urban, Gent.”, fictional editor of the *Gentlemen’s Magazine*, seems at first the sign for a real person. The allegorical name is an eighteenth century hold-over, similar to the famous “Mr. Spectator”. But the magazine, founded in 1731, had been edited for well more than a lifetime by this single “editor”. The persona evidently exists independently of a single author, being connected far more meaningfully to the magazine’s brand. The referentiality of the name proves to be temporally contingent. It does, in fact, indicate the editor of the magazine—and thus that it *can* be said to signify a real person at a particular time. “Sylvanus Urban, Gent.” refers to whoever happens to be the editor of the *Gentleman’s Magazine* at the present moment.

⁴⁰ Lord Ruthven, a character based on Lord Byron in Lady Caroline Lamb’s 1816 Gothic novel *Glenarvon*, offered an unflattering portrait of the poet.

This tension between fictional and referential codes runs throughout the periodical sphere. Like the names of Anna Mathilda and Della Crusca in the *The World* newspaper, the *London Magazine*'s "Elia" and "Janus Weathercock" invoke fictionality with their stylized names—Weathercock, especially, reads as a literalization of the periodical's trademark inconsistency—but in their stable sites of publication and their references to each other in the magazine they produce the impression single, real authors. Even the slippery Christopher North, by the very act of appearing by name in *Blackwood's*, reads as fictional; in contrast, consider the cases of Francis Jeffrey and William Gifford, who despite being officially *unnamed*, were taken by their contemporaries "to personify the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*" (Wheatley 2013, 8). Meanwhile, Thomas De Quincey as the "English Opium-Eater" and James Hogg as "The Ettrick Shepherd" suggest, through their epithets, a vague (and potentially scandalous) referentiality. According to Gallagher's explanation of fictionality in the novel, these complicate the field of fictionality and referentiality because of their mixed signals, drawing simultaneously on the conventions of character and the legal status of people. It is less useful, I contend, produce a taxonomy in which Elia is more or less "real" than the English Opium-Eater, than to acknowledge that the play of referentiality and fictionality is part of the intended effect of the periodical persona. This play constitutes part of the performance of authorship that the persona undertakes. Obfuscation and literary allusion both figure as acts of persona creation, rather than random fluctuation. Populating the vast middle ground between the established fictionality of an Elizabeth Bennett and the clear referentiality of a Lord B----, the personae of the Romantic periodical demarcate this middle zone as the zone of creativity, and increasingly, *authorship*.

What most differentiates periodical personae from the novelistic characters with which Gallagher is concerned is that periodical personae are explicitly the authors (or editors) of the texts in which they appear. Aside rare exceptions like Elia's death announcement in the *London*

Magazine, Romantic periodical personae produce diegetic commentaries on their own acts of creation. That is to say that not merely are these personae, but they are personae *of* and *as* authors. They make the discussion of their own writing a central focus of their work. Charles Lamb's Elia, for example, celebrates his newfound control over his time after retiring from his work as a clerk in "The Superannuated Man":

I walk, read or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. [...] I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for my three-fold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. (196)

This emphasis on the constraints of time and money that produce periodical writing is a key feature of the periodical persona. It provides a refrain that unites periodical personae—from Janus Weathercock's meditations on how to select a subject for his article to the literary gossip that peppers and pads out the *Noctes Ambrosianae*. That the personae of the magazines are explicitly authorial personae is important to how they function and why they arise. As authors they produce and regulate fictionality and as public personae they promise a tantalizing referentiality. Through their practice, however fictional, they embody—if such a verb can describe a non-corporal writing entity—the constraints and freedoms of authorship in these years. This is not authorship of the transcendent kind, nor is it the author as celebrity; instead, personae perform authorship as a new, more creative version of personhood within and of the mundane conditions of daily life. Their performances are the record of that "time, which a man can properly call his own", recasting their "scribbling" as a luxurious personal space of self-cultivation and -fictionalization.

One final stumbling block to our understanding of the periodical persona must be addressed: the problem of its occasionally collective and even unauthorized production.

Attribution work on Romantic periodicals has been very useful in raising the visibility of the genre and deepening our understanding of the careers of particular anonymous contributors, but the explanatory power that it offers to periodical personae may be illusory. I propose that we move beyond the idea of verifying authorship and consolidating personae through the classification of authentic or spurious performances. Instead we should consider it a fundamental feature of persona that it is at least sometimes characterized by collaborative or unauthenticated authorship. The instability introduced by unauthorized versions of personae is an integral part of the periodical form and reading experience. These personae appeared without signatures, and often across different periodicals, meaning that readers could not evaluate them merely on the means of signature or publication source. A project of authentication threatens to cancel the unofficial texts rather than articulating their relationship to the official ones—erasing rather than explaining the experience of inauthenticity.

Instead of the language of authenticity, I would like to propose an alternate language drawn from J. L. Austin's speech act theory, one that does justice to the performative nature of persona-creation. In describing speech acts, Austin explains that they can be neither true nor false statements, but rather, can be made "felicitous" or "infelicitous" by the circumstances of their performance. To follow this important distinction: like a speech act, a performance of a given persona should be thought of not as false (or inauthentic), but as infelicitous, or—as Austin says—"as not implemented, or not consummated, rather than as void or without effect" (16). The quality of felicity provides a much more useful frame through which to examine the various deployments of a given persona in different periodicals and occasionally by different hands. Personae function by setting out a set of conventions or parameters by which they are defined. Subsequent performances may expand or revise the conventions of the persona, but if they differ too greatly, readers will deem them infelicitous. Iterations of a persona that stray too far afield

function less as threats to the “authentic” performance of the persona, than as limits by which the requirements for a felicitous performance can be understood. In this way, then, we might think about the personae of the Romantic period existing along a spectrum of specificity, which would indicate the difficulty of producing a felicitous performance. At the low end, then, we might place someone like the Ettrick Shepherd, whose Scots dialect and loutish behavior make him an easy persona for various writers to perform, ultimately at the expense of James Hogg’s control over “his” magazine persona. As Margaret Russet describes it, “Hogg found that he had become the “real impersonation” of his magazine byline: its effect rather than its cause” (174). At the other end of the spectrum, we might place Thomas De Quincey’s English Opium-Eater, whose brand of gloriously-illuminated pedantry is easy to parody (as in Grattan’s “Confessions of an English Glutton”) but less easy to hijack completely. In the *Noctes Ambrosianae*, for instance, performances of the Opium-Eater written by John Wilson et. al. are not always entirely felicitous.⁴¹ Thus, the infelicitous performance of a periodical persona can actually work to reinforce its limits rather than to cloud them.

⁴¹ John Wilson’s version of the Opium-Eater performs his pedantry and involuted syntax, but is not entirely felicitous in his opinions on German literature

OPIUM EATER: the Periodical literature of the Age is infinitely superior to all its other philosophical criticism—for example, the charlatanerie of the Schlegels, *et id genus omne*, is as certain—Mr Hogg, pardon me for imitating your illustrative imagery, or attempting to imitate what all the world allows to be inimitable—as that the hotch-potch which you are now swallowing, in spite of the heat that seems breathed from the torrid zone—

SHEPHERD: It’s no hotch-potch—this plateful’s cocky-leeky.

OPIUM EATER: As that cocky-leeky which, though hot as purgatory, (the company will pardon me for yielding to the influence of the *genius loci*,) you mouth is, and has for a quarter of an hour has been vortex-like engulfing, transcends, in all that is best in animal and vegetable matter,—worthy indeed of Scotland’s manly Shepherd—the *soup maigre*, that, attenuated almost to invisibility, drenches the odiously guttural gullet of some monkey Frenchman of the old school, by the incomprehensible interposition of Providence saved at the era of the Revolution from the guillotine. (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 666)

Taking persona, then, as the base unit of periodical authorship, I will be exploring how these entities are introduced, and how they embrace and negotiate personality culture to their own ends. In so doing, I'd like to follow the suggestion made by Mark Schoenfield, that we are liable to treat periodical culture with too pessimistic a tone: it is a sphere where "individuals experienced not only terror, but also existential delight, self-invention, self-marketing, opportunities for profit and fame" (3). If the previous chapters have been concerned with some of the deep anxieties processed and produced by the periodical world, this one will be concerned with its more utopian impulses. In the periodical persona, authors created precisely what earlier book reviewers had been afraid of: a world in which authorship was embodied, quotidian, and democratized—where ingenious manipulations of the periodical persona helped guarantee that the author was an interesting and valuable person.

II: Test-Case – Thomas De Quincey and the English Opium-Eater

Thomas De Quincey's "English Opium-Eater" provides relatively familiar ground on which to explore the periodical persona. It displays the key aspects of such a persona: its iterative qualities, its assumption of exceptionality, and its focus on physical embodiment. The Opium-Eater was introduced in the two-part publication of the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" in the *London Magazine* in September and October 1821. This text was signed only "XYZ", less a pseudonym than a general sign for anonymity in the period.⁴² The one-volume book-version of the *Confessions* appeared in 1822, with only minor changes. It was met with mixed reviews and

This is an overdoing of the Opium-Eater persona, and a nice example of the way that even the non-authorized and somewhat infelicitous performance of the persona serves to reinforce rather than dilute it. Certainly, his disgust for Schlegel, as well as the image of the Shepherd's vortex-like mouth diverge from and exaggerate the Opium-Eater persona's general characteristics, but we still recognize and evaluate his place within Opium-Eater utterances.

⁴² In fact, the Gale British Periodicals database returns over 150 hits with "X.Y.Z." in the author field prior to 1820.

substantial speculation about its author's identity and trustworthiness. As the reviewer for the *British Review and London Critical Journal* mused:

It is not easy to say what the author intends by his book, except for its sale and circulation; whether he means what he says, or if not at all, how much; whether he is serious, and if not always, when; whether he designs to deal in fact, or in fiction; whether he intends to praise, or to ridicule; to reverence, or to scoff; to laugh, or to cry; whether he is learned or unlearned; gloomy, or gay; busy, or idle; married, or single. (*BR* 20 [1822] 474-5)

For this reviewer, the Opium-Eater is a dangerous persona who might seem to be serious, while the author himself secretly mocks his credulous readers. The Opium-Eater persona is tethered to a body, but the status of that body (married or single) requires determination before the text can be interpreted. William Maginn (most famous as one of *Blackwood's* early contributors) outed De Quincey as the author of the *Confessions* in an 1824 *John Bull Magazine* article "The Humbugs of the Age. No 1". Rife with personalities, the article probed the disjuncture between the real life of the author and the Opium-Eater, highlighting De Quincey's transgressions and quirks: the illegitimacy of his first child, his pretentious assumption of the noble particle, his unsubstantiated status as a scholar, and his uneasy friendship with the Lake poets (*JBM* 1 (1824): 21). In this article, the *John Bull Magazine* revealed the author behind the Opium-Eater, but rather than destroying the Opium-Eater as a persona, this article is had the effect of policing its coherence—and of course, increasing its fame.⁴³

De Quincey went on to contribute as "The English Opium-Eater" to several periodicals.

His later appearances in the *London Magazine* include the "Letters to a Young Man whose

⁴³ That I am opening up the space between De Quincey and the subject of the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* may be surprising, given the autobiographical nature of that text—the titles to two recent biographies, Grevel Lindop's *The Opium-Eater: A Life of Thomas De Quincey* and Robert Morrison's *The English Opium-Eater: A Biography of Thomas De Quincey* legitimize this connection between persona and author. The reasons for linking De Quincey with his Opium-Eater are not unaccountable; most of what he recounted in his confessions has proved to be factually true. But as this section will detail, reading the Opium-Eater as a persona rather than a literal reflection of De Quincey brings its commonalities with other periodical personae to light.

Education has been Neglected”, which played off the (disputed) scholarly status of the Opium-Eater persona to provide reflections on the state of contemporary authorship and publishing.⁴⁴ After the publication of the Maginn article and the exposure of De Quincey’s private life, the Opium-Eater persona continued, authoring “Sketches of Life and Manners from the Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater” in *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine*, less a continuation of the life-narrative from the original *Confessions* than a use of that persona to offer his audience what he called “the flower of all my reading, thinking, and scheming for twenty odd years” (De Quincey 2003, vol X, xiii). Finally, the Opium-Eater did some unauthorized moonlighting in *Blackwood’s* in the *Noctes Ambrosianae* of April 1830—penned by John Wilson. The Opium-Eater, then, exemplifies my definition of the periodical persona: he authors multiple texts, moves between periodicals, and is, at least at times, collectively produced.⁴⁵

While the English Opium-Eater is a typical persona, he, like others, obtrudes himself on the reader’s attention with a claim of exceptionality. His right to the reader’s attention depends on his unique experience and perspective. Subtitled “an extract from the life of a scholar”, the *Confessions* assert the intellectual exceptionality of its author-protagonist from the outset. His opium use, moreover, grants him a further area of special authority. Dwelling on precisely the sort of information that a personal book review would reveal, the Opium-Eater centers his authorial identity on his unusual transgression. This mode of persona-construction through

⁴⁴ The scholarly persona is not quite stable, and swings between defenses of the sort of periodical work in which De Quincey himself was engaged and more conventional admonishments against the flood of new books. The letter of January 1823, for instance, is devoted to a refutation of Coleridge’s claim in the *Biographia Literaria* that authorship is a profession to be avoided. Meanwhile, the letter of March 1823 contains more conservative (even cliché) criticism of the “enormous ‘gluttonism’ for books” of the contemporary reader (De Quincey 2000, vol III, 65).

⁴⁵ As the (main) author of this persona, and the real, legal person to whom the persona is linked, Thomas De Quincey is equally typical: his peregrinating career, his penury, his mercenariness, and accompanying betrayals are emblematic of the condition of the Romantic period magazine author. We can certainly infer the degree to which the conditions of the latter produce the former.

exceptionality was, in fact, typical. It was so common as to be satirized by *Blackwood's* in Thomas Grattan's 1823 "Confessions of an English Glutton". The satirical confessor is presented as the last in a long line of self-indulgent periodical personae: "since the Wine-drinker, the Opium-eater, the Hypochondriac, and the Hypercritic, have in due succession 'told their fatal stories out,' I cannot, in justice to my own importance, or honesty to the world, leave the blank unfilled, which stands gaping to receive the Confessions of a Glutton, and thus put the last leaf on this branch of periodical personality" (*BEM* 13: 72 [January 1823] 86). The Glutton's confessions round out the panorama of periodical personae in which human experience is understood through a range of consumption patterns. The Glutton outlines a paradox in which the fine differentiation of these consumption patterns threatens to erase, rather than create further individuality: "This is confessedly the age of confession,—the era of individuality—the triumphant reign of the first person singular. Writers no longer talk in generals. [...] There are no longer any idiosyncrasies in the understanding of our essayists, for one common characteristic runs through the whole range. Egotism has become as endemical to English literature as the plague of Egypt, or the scurvy to the northern climes" (*BEM* 13: 72 [January 1823] 86). Read backward through the insights of the English Glutton, the English Opium-Eater's exceptional drug use is less a unique trait, than a typical construction of authorial individuality through the unusual.

What renders this periodical voice special—and distinct from the transgressor's confessional voice found in ephemeral genres like the criminal confession—is the manner in which the persona's consumption patterns are explicitly linked to its literary productions. When the Opium-Eater introduces his confessions, he frames his account as informational rather than personal. He stresses the instructive value of the work over and above his own personal interest in thus disburdening himself—or over any prurient interest the title might provoke. This pose is important to forestall the potential charge of excessive self-exposure that his title's nod to

Rousseau invites. However, diligence done to morality, De Quincey is not about to disappoint his readers. The *Confessions* are in actuality an individual's autobiography rather than an unbiased scientific account. This narrative marshals the signs of referentiality to confer a hint of scandal: the use of precise dates, for instance, allows the reader to cement the scholar's age, and his practice of concealing the names of key places (such as Manchester Grammar School) with blanks encourages the impression of a real confession. This whiff of authenticity invokes the frisson of the personal. Structurally, too, the text devotes considerable space to the Opium-Eater's childhood, a move intended to "creat[e] some previous interest of a *personal* sort in the confessing subject, which cannot fail to render the confessions themselves more interesting" (1966, 26, my italics). Opium-eating may be the sensational draw, but it is the scholar's own personal history that will make the *Confessions* readable: it will sustain interest and forestall disgust where each is needed. All prophylactic prefaces aside, the personal is what the *Confessions* will sell—the Opium-Eater's persona.

The Opium-Eater's persona and his opium use are mutually constitutive. While, in our contemporary understanding of addiction, the drug addict is imagined to find their personality swallowed up by the personality of their substance of choice, the Opium-Eater can only really become himself through drug use. Opium *intensifies* rather than replaces the personal; as De Quincey claims, "no quantity of opium ever did, or could, intoxicate" (1966, 62). Instead, it renders a person more themselves. In perhaps the most quoted line of the *Confessions*, he claims: "If a man 'whose talk is of oxen' should become an opium-eater, the probability is that (if he is not too dull to dream at all) he will dream about oxen" (1966, 26). Opium cannot supply deficiencies of class, education, and taste. Fortunately, the English Opium-Eater is a self-proclaimed scholar, and explains: "whereas, in the case before him, the reader will find that the opium-eater boasteth himself to be a philosopher, and accordingly, that the phantasmagoria of *his*

dreams (waking or sleeping, day dreams or night dreams) is suitable to one who, in that character, *Humani nihil a se alienum putat*” [finds nothing human alien to himself] (1966, 26). By claiming the status of philosopher, the Opium-Eater asserts a familiarity with the human condition that promises to grant his production a broader and more profound application. His use of opium is merely a delivery system for his philosophical insights.

As such a delivery system, opium influences perhaps not the insights of the *Confessions*, but certainly its style and genre. As a scholar and philosopher, the Opium-Eater’s insights might not normally appear in a forum like the *London Magazine*, but rather than producing academic treatises the opium philosopher now produces periodical literature. It is opium that has transformed him into an author who addresses the general public. By changing the venue and audience of the scholar’s thoughts, opium both intensifies and embodies him. As a justification for, and representation of, magazine authorship, opium provides a model for how the magazine persona operates. Opium acts as a prosthesis for a body that was always already set up to demand it. The Opium-Eater stresses the continuity of his bodily experience over the course of his life. The roots of his dependence lie in an early experience of pain, he insists, and this pain emerges as a function of his bodily memory: “In the twenty-eighth year of my age, a most painful affection of the stomach, which I had first experienced about ten years before, attacked me in great strength. This affection had been originally caused by the extremities of hunger suffered in my boyish days” (1966, 27-8). The “experience” he refers to here is the time he spent homeless in London after running away from school, an experience that takes up the bulk of his “Preliminary Confessions”. The hunger he experiences in London set up his predisposition to pain, and therefore his need for opium. Brushing aside his recreational use of the drug as a university

student,⁴⁶ the Opium-Eater insistently attributes his opium use to a resurgent affliction of the stomach—an affliction that connects his childhood with his present condition and makes it relevant to his current addiction. Opium is something that enables, rather than disables him. His dependence is not the product of “accident”, a term which is often repeated at key moments in the *Confessions*,⁴⁷ but the answer to a traumatic bodily memory—a ritual that restores him to himself. By foregrounding his body in this way, the Opium-Eater reimagines the accidents of his life as *meaningful*—submerged chains of cause and effect that must be properly read. As an author, it is the *writing* of the life-récit that makes such a proper reading possible. The Opium-Eater constructs the coherent and restored body by creating this account of his opium use.

The Opium-Eater’s bodily experience—his congenital bodily problems, rather than his addiction and opium itself—plays an acknowledged role in structuring how he writes. His infirmity provides not just an intensification of his scholarly personality, but of his style of writing and speaking. For instance, he explains:

I have a very reprehensible way of jesting, at times, in the midst of my own misery; and unless when I am checked by some more powerful feelings, I am afraid I shall be guilty of this indecent practice even in these annals of suffering or enjoyment. The reader must allow a little to my infirm nature in this respect; and, with a few indulgences of that sort, I shall endeavor to be as grave, if not drowsy, as fits a theme like opium, so anti-mercurial as it really is, and so drowsy as it is falsely reputed. (1966, 61)

His natural style is a jesting and often inappropriate one and his opium addiction *excuses* rather than occasions his lapses. Because of his infirmity, he is unable to suppress himself and conform to social conventions. His true style—and thus his true self—would be invisible were it not for

⁴⁶ This recreational use included attending the opera or working class pubs while under the influence (1966, 68 *passim*).

⁴⁷ At the time of his flight from school, for instance, the Opium-Eater is directed by a vague force of accident: “Accident, however, gave a different direction to my wanderings, and I bent my steps toward North Wales” (1966, 33).

the occasion of opium. The infirmity of the body makes personality visible and the Opium-Eater is made more himself by illness. In this persona, as in all magazine personae, the body acts as a site of intensification of the self. It provides a site where what is divergent and unusual can be embraced as constructive. In this move, we can recognize an inversion of the technique of personality. Rather than revealing the authorial body in order to reduce the work to it—as personalities would do—the body becomes a means of structuring and explaining the creative freedoms taken in the work.

Above all, the use of the body by the periodical persona is tactical. The Opium-Eater displays this feature when he elects to conceal his body at key moments. He pauses to explain his decision to withhold a physical description of his face:

I admit that, naturally, I ought to occupy the foreground of the picture, that being the hero of the piece, or (if you choose) the criminal at the bar, my body should be had into court. This seems reasonable, but why should I confess, on this point, to a painter? Or, why confess at all? If the public (into whose private ear I am confidentially whispering my confessions, and not into the painter's) should chance to have framed some agreeable picture for itself of the opium-eater's exterior, should have ascribed to him, romantically, an elegant person or a handsome face, why should I barbarously tear from it so pleasing a delusion—pleasing both to the public and to me? (1966, 83)

In juxtaposing the painter and the writer, the Opium-Eater draws attention to the indeterminacy that writing makes possible. Despite the extremely personal nature of his confession—the way his person and his body anchors his entire authority—the Opium-Eater selects occasions on which to withhold personal information. He refuses to commission the painter for his portrait and thereby manipulates the way his body will enter into the text. The body is central, but in its purely visible aspects it is elided. Instead, by focusing on the parts of his body that are felt and revealed over time and in habit, the Opium-Eater constructs his body differently from the simple personality attack. He does not invoke the stability of his looks but rather explores the instability of his health and the insights and experiences that it leads him to. This desire to at once conceal and discuss

the body shows the tactical use that periodical personae make of it. This authorial body is a quotidian one but also a flexible one. Often pathologized, it becomes central to social behavior and artistic production. As the Opium-Eater would announce later in his “Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected”: “In general, a man has reason to think himself well off in the great lottery of this life if he draws the prize of a healthy stomach without a mind, or the prize of a fine intellect with a crazy stomach: but that any man should draw both, is truly astonishing; and I suppose happens only once a century” (De Quincey 2000, vol III, 45). Infirm bodies are potentially the sign of greater intellect, and the magazine writer’s ability to conjure and explain the experience of his body serves to produce his authority. Drawing on the seemingly insignificant aspects, these authors theorize the body’s explanatory power in ways that far exceed the terms set out by the personality attack.

III: Living in “such a crazy body as mine”

In the final pages of the *Confessions*, the Opium-Eater offers his body to the “gentlemen of Surgeon’s Hall” upon his death: “I assure them that they will do me too much honor by ‘demonstrating’ on such a crazy body as mine; and it will give me pleasure to anticipate this posthumous revenge and insult inflicted upon that which has caused me so much suffering in this life” (1966, 110). In planning the final humiliation of his problematic body, the Opium-Eater signals the extent to which his embodiment is collapsed into the text he produces—it promises information to science even if the text fails. His body supplements the text, providing a more perfect form of its information after his death. In deploying the body, a persona like the Opium-Eater draws on, and often manipulates, the interest in authorial bodies generated by the culture of personalities. With the Opium-Eater, the final offer of the body as data mirrors—and anticipates—the move made by William Maginn in attacking him. In this following section, I explore more deeply the permutations of these authorial bodies under siege. I focus in particular

on the importance of that ever-available target of personalities—physical infirmity—to the work of periodical persona. Indeed, as a blanket statement we might claim that the body of the magazine persona is always an infirm one.

From the Opium-Eater's drug use, to Christopher North's limp, to Elia's stammer, to the Ettrick Shepherd's gluttony and alcoholism, the periodical persona is almost always anchored in an experience of bodily unnormativity. Yet, infirmities work counterintuitively in constituting a periodical identity; they are less symbolic clues to a persona's character than a means through which to explore the experience of living. As a never-quite stable state of consciousness that must be reinvoked and reexamined—the experience of bodily infirmity differs from iteration to iteration and needs to be understood anew at every turn. It recapitulates the iterative qualities of persona-creation and its experience and narration help cement the literary and authorial power of the persona. For this reason, it is especially attractive, even essential, to periodical authorship; it transforms the defects of the periodical form—anonymity, contradiction, and digression—into opportunities for self-fictionalization through performance.

As magazine writers embody their personae, they make a move away from exceptional embodiments to more quotidian and mundane aspects. And while periodical personae are overwhelmingly gendered as male, their particular bodily experiences are not circumscribed to men. Their embodiment is quotidian, iterative, and easily universalized. Rather than focusing on permanent condition such as blindness, they experience an addiction, a limp, or a stammer—infirmities that imply guilt or invite comedy—invoking the terms of personality attacks in order to reclaim them.

Let us examine, for instance, Elia and his stammer. Easily a potential object of personality, Charles Lamb's stammer is aggressively bestowed on his *London Magazine* persona

Elia. Rather than hide this potentially risible personal trait, Lamb foregrounds it, making it part of Elia's identity. The stammer defines Elia's social interactions. In the obituary for Elia that introduced his last essays in the *London Magazine*, Lamb reflects on how Elia's stammer affected his social behavior, making him into somewhat obnoxious conversationalist:

He too much affected that dangerous figure—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred.—He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. (152)

Elia attempts to level the field with his dinner-companions. His stammer leads to a kind of jealous conversational behavior in which he does not let others give fine speeches. This stammer, like Opium-Eater's meditations and digressions, is obliquely caused or intensified by Lamb's habits of consumption: "Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments, which tongue-tied him, were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statish!" (153) The tongue-loosening effects of his smoking paradoxically produce and obscure Elia's stammer. While temporarily transforming him into an orator, it allows him to remain the familiar stammerer curling up his prattle into smokelike shapes. The image softens the staccato of the stammer into fluid loops of repetition. By representing the stammer as a smokelike curl of conversation, Lamb recasts this potentially risible attribute as something aesthetic, perhaps even incantatory.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ To preempt personality becomes a hallmark of the self-aware magazine persona. The *London Magazine*'s Janus Weathercock, for instance, puns on the word "premises" when he requests that his criticisms be attacked based on content rather than personalities about his financial situation: "And if the ingenious gentleman who has been twice didactic on the Elgin marbles would have the kindness to consider the force of my conclusions as enfeebled by the *rottenness* of my premises (not my tenements and hereditaments)." (*LM* 6:31 [July 1822] 72)

As the descriptive richness of Elia's smoke-stammer suggests, the stammer is crucial to his career as a writer. As with the Opium-Eater, the bodily defect provides an excuse or occasion to turn to an otherwise suspect profession. Thus, he explains in "Barbara S-----:" "I was always fond of the society of players, and am not sure that an impediment in speech (which certainly kept me out of the pulpit) even more than certain personal disqualifications, which are often got over in that profession, did not prevent me at one time of life from adopting it" (204). Clouded with double negatives, this confession links Elia's writerly occupation with his body. His stammer circumscribes him to the page, freeing him from the need to pursue the ecclesiastical career, that, like so many Romantic writers, he rejects and precluding him from descending to the more sordid occupation of actor. Scattered throughout the essays, the stammer provides a note of familiarity, and quiet reminder that we are reading Elia, and not some other magazine persona. Taking leave of his work as a clerk in "The Superannuated Man", for instance, Elia "stammered out a bow" of thanks to his former employers who have pensioned him off (195). In this lovely confusion of speech and body, we are gently reminded that we are looking at Elia, whose stammer has become a symbol of his cautiousness and benign nonconformity. Turning personality on its head, Elia foregrounds his stammering speech and stammering body as indications of his unique experience and insight.

In Elia, then, we see an example of how the quotidian experience of the produces the persona as an author. It provides at least a qualification, and more likely a revision of, Mark Schoenfield's claim that the weakness of the authorial body acts as a symbol of literary prowess in this period:

Scott's weak limb, like Byron's club foot, Pringle's limp, and Christopher North's invented frailty and lameness, is never fully "out of the question," but rather the supplemental imperfection that secures the literary, lameness having replaced blindness as the mark of literariness, as one reviewer puts it. (217)

Unlike blindness, Elia's stammer does not merely symbolize his literary skill, it produces the material conditions in which writing takes place and acts as a recurring reminder of the quotidian, the awkward, and the risible. Thus, the limitation in Schoenfield's claim lies in his bringing together a broader range of authorial types, covering over the non-symbolic deployment of the infirm body by periodical personae. In periodicals, the infirm body offers a diachronic experience that enables literary work. The embodiment of a periodical persona is iterative, and subject to change over time. In the very mundanity of its variations it is emphatically not a grand symbol, but a vexation that connects the periodical persona to everyday life.

For example, Christopher North, unlike the stable (nay, immortal) Sylvanus Urban, changes over the course of his *Blackwood's* tenure. His trademark lameness does not figure consistently across different depictions. Despite his dependence on a crutch, North is famed for "loupin'" or jumping; as the Ettrick Shepherd admonished him: "There's Byron, braggin' o' his soomin', just like yourself o' your loupin'" (*BEM* 15:87 [April 1824] 371). His bachelorhood, which Lisa Niles identifies as a shared identity of periodical contributors as far back the Mr. Spector, is at risk of a change (103). North both pursues the courtship of a wealthy old widow—"she's sixty, if she's an hour"—and is mistaken for the author of a matrimonial advertisement and must flee a crowd of potential mates "instinctively brandishing my crutch" (*BEM* 24:146 [December 1828] 678, 682). While hosting the raucous dinners at Ambrose's Tavern, North is prone to over-indulge, yet at other moments, he abstains, insisting to the Shepherd that he is on a "regimen" and must restrict himself to a single jug of whiskey and water "not very strong, if you please" (*BEM* 21:121 (January 1827) 100). North's changeability attests to the breadth of performances that can read as felicitous for this persona and the intermittent quality of his

disability registers lived experience in lieu of symbolic stability. His persona evolves through his adventures, like a character in a novel.⁴⁹

This changeability is explicitly connected with the periodical in the *Noctes Ambrosianae*. North insists that those who valorize consistency misunderstand the periodical medium—inconsistency is its true condition. North differentiates his more self-aware periodical editorship from the stodgy consistency embraced by the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*: “There is some fun in that fellow, but he is rather spoony in imaging that the contributor of 1824 is bound to follow the opinions of him of 1818” (*BEM* 16:94 [November 1824] 586). Consistency, as a feature of the magazine’s contributors, is resolutely dismissed as a readerly expectation. Even the rustic Gudeman met by North in a Girnaway farmhouse knows better than to expect consistency out of magazine personae. He is stunned to discover that North is “a loupin’, livin’, flesh and bluid man, with read rudiments and a wooden crutch, just as gien out in that ance-a-month peerioddical” (*BEM* 12:68 [September 1822] 386-7). Savvy readers are meant to share the Gudeman’s astonishment, and to recognize North as an unstable, fictional construct. The magazine insists on its right to be different to itself over time, as well as to its internal differences within contributors and personae. Christopher North, as editor, stands up for the periodical, connecting its inconsistency with values of the quotidian, the comic, and the living.

Infirmity—both in the intermittent experience of chronic conditions and the occasional case of acute illness—permits periodical personae to explore the essential instability of writerly self-representation. Exploring the privileges of the sickroom in “The Convalescent”, Elia takes

⁴⁹ In fact, John Wilson (primary, although not sole author of North) would eventually merge his *Blackwood’s* representation of North with his own public identity. Rearranging and rewriting many of his contributions for the three volume *Recreations of Christopher North* (1842), Wilson softened his critical judgements of his contemporaries, especially the Cockneys (Strout, 94). In the Victorian era, within the covers of its iconic book format, North grows up and is reconnected with a stable referentiality.

illness as an opportunity to meditate on the exceptional state of personhood that it can produce. Elia's sickness produces a contraction of the world that intensifies his sense of self: "A pretty severe fit of indisposition which, under the name of a nervous fever, has made a prisoner of me for some weeks past, and is but slowly leaving me, has reduced me to an incapacity of reflecting upon any topic foreign to itself. Expect no healthy conclusions from me this month, reader; I can offer you only sick men's dreams" (183). The indisposition goes under the name of "nervous fever" but seems to exceed and elude that diagnosis. This fever's main symptom is the extended meditation on self and sickness that Elia writes. The sickness focusses all his reflections on his bodily state, allowing him to suspend, for a period, the flow of everyday life.

Elia's sickness permits him to tap temporarily into an alternate self, tyrannizing over his household. He expounds on the sick bed as an exalted place, a seat of power: "If there be a regal solitude, it is a sick bed. How the patient lords it there! what caprices he acts without controul! how king-like he sways his pillow—tumbling, and tossing, and shifting, and lowering, and thumping, and flatting, and moulding it, to the ever varying requisitions of his throbbing temples." (184) Elia's temporary illness grants him access to an enhanced view of his own selfhood. It allows him to accede to a temporary position of power over others and prompts him to a concomitant insight about the human experience:

To be sick is to enjoy monarchical prerogatives. Compare the silent tread, and quiet ministry, almost by the eye only, with which he is served—with the careless demeanour, the unceremonious going in and out (slapping of doors, or leaving them open) of the very same attendants, when he is getting a little better—and you will confess, that from the bed of sickness (throne let me rather call it) to the elbow chair of convalescence, is a fall from dignity, amounting to a deposition. (185)

Celebrating the invalid's dictatorial position, Elia is moved to greater self-understanding by the very transitory nature of his condition. Comically playing with the temporary invalid's reversion of status upon convalescence, Elia revels in the idea of this brief exchange of power: a tyranny all

the sweeter for being limited. By exalting this temporary, yet highly relatable state, Elia founds his authorship his experience of everyday life; but even more importantly, he lays out a template of living authorship as an intermittent practice rather than a stable identity—something that one moves in and out of, that is congruent with average life rather than exempt from it.

As he closes the essay, Elia demonstrates the non-congruence that such authorial performances introduce into the authorial self. He attempts to close off the tyrannical sick body which he had so enjoyed, separating it from his writerly body. Lining up his full recovery with the end of his essay, Elia explains

The hypochondriac flatus is subsiding; the acres, which in imagination I had spread over—for the sick man swells in the sole contemplation of his single sufferings, till he becomes a Tityus to himself—are wasting to a span; and for the giant of self-importance, which I was so lately, you have me once again in my natural pretensions—the lean and meagre figure of your insignificant Essayist. (186-7)

This is a conflicted closing. As he leaves off—rather than begins—writing, Elia asserts his return to the body of the Essayist. The essay itself, however, issues from the comically and playfully tyrannical sick body. The essay is a product of a body that the essayist disavows. The figure of the insignificant essayist can only occur at the edge of writing, at the moment when the writing ceases. The reader is left with an unsettled image of the authorial body. The essayist is neither his insignificant figure nor the sick body that has ceased to exist. Rather, the essayist is a person caught between the two, interesting because of his very ability to observe and comment upon both. It is in the production of this body that Elia shows off his persona to greatest effect. Instability—like his intermittent stammer—constitutes his interest.

From chronic conditions to nervous illnesses, magazine personae model infirmity as a source of literary insight, and the body as the place for the construction of an exceptional authorial self. The “crazy bodies” of periodical personae embrace and exceed personality. Rather

than cementing embodiment as personality attacks did, the personae embrace embodiment in all its infirmity, instability, and iterativeness. From the pens of different contributors and across different periodicals, the form everywhere gives rise to this sort of experimentation with authorship. Under the conditions of personality culture, periodicals propose an infirm body as the ground on which the insights of authorship will be worked. At the furthest extreme, the bodies of these periodical personae are extremely plastic. In the case of James Hogg's *The Spy*, distortion of the authorial body can produce new stylistic insights—by “putting my body into the same posture which seems most familiar to them [other people], I can ascertain the compass of their minds and thoughts, to a few items, either on the one side or the other,—not precisely what they are thinking of at the time, but the way that they would think about any thing” (No. 1 [Saturday September 1, 1810] 4). Habits of body grant access to habits of mind, allowing willful illness and intoxication to acquire value as deliberate, creative acts.

IV: *London* Cockneys, or How to Consume like an Author

By the 1820s, it seemed like the worst thing an author could be was a Cockney. Like the eighteenth-century “cit”, the Cockney was a “city-dweller” who “reveals his trade origins in his fervor for ‘tasteful’ ‘countrified’ pursuits” (Stewart 2011, 85). Satirical illustrations by James Gillray published the 1790s emphasized the Cockney’s comic physical ineptitude as he aped country pursuits such as hunting. Cockneys were comic figures, whose social gaffes provided easy laughs to consumers of both image and text. Tracing the history of a “Cockney Moment” that runs from the Regency through to the early years of Dickens’ career, Gregory Dart defines the Cockney as “a metropolitan miscreant, a pampered and effeminate child of the city” (203). For David Stewart, too, the Cockney is an explicitly metropolitan figure; like the unmappable metropolis, the Cockney “prompted the feeling that it had become impossible to discover a clear pattern to social and aesthetic judgements” (2011, 93). But this figure is not merely an

instantiation of the metropolitan or the suburban. As both Dart and Stewart note, the pervasiveness of the Cockney in Romantic magazines hints at his connection with periodical writing. “The newly expanded field of periodical journalism might itself be seen as a kind of Cockney realm,” Dart explains, “liberal and open in some respects, but superficial and fashion hungry in others” (205). Stewart, too, detects the contradictions of the city in the periodical: “Magazines, much like the city, derive a power that is simultaneously unstable and enjoyable” (2011, 94). This connection between Cockneydom and periodical authorship runs deep, inflecting even the way that periodical personae are constructed. While Dart and Stewart have focused in particular on the role of the urban in defining both the Cockney and the magazine, I would like to consider the Cockney trope itself more fully. The terms of the Cockney stereotype that derive from attacks like those in *Blackwood’s* give rise to the Cockney not merely as an inept urbanite but as an *author*. It is this explicit representation of the Cockney author that personae in the *London Magazine* will embrace and exploit.

The “Cockney School” attacks in *Blackwood’s Magazine* established the Cockney author as a figure of ridicule, characterized by “vulgar vanity, [...] audacious arrogance, [...] conceited coxcombry, [...] [and] ignorant pedantry—all the manifold sins and iniquities of Cockneyism lie spread before me as in a map” (BEM 3:14 [May 1818] 200). In these attacks, the physical defects and social ineptitude of Cockney authors came to symbolize their literary transgressions. As I traced in my second chapter, *Blackwood’s* focused on Hazlitt’s pimples and Leigh Hunt’s penchant for artificial flowers and flesh-colored stockings as bodily indicators of their Cockney identities. To be accused of being a Cockney was to be exposed and ostracized as a *visually obvious* authorial type. But in another instance of periodical writers reclaiming and reframing the terms of personality attack, writers for the *London Magazine* deployed the Cockney trope as an authorial persona. Travelling from the *Blackwood’s Magazine’s* attacks to the *London* and back

again, the Cockney trope is invoked by periodical personae of all political persuasions, uniting the personae of *Blackwood's* with the objects of their attack and suggesting, in fact, that Cockneydom and living authorship are synonymous. In this section and the one that follows, I will track the figure of the Cockney figure through the *London* and into *Blackwood's*, underlining how it comes to trope living authorship as a quotidian, embodied experience and valorizes those authors who can assert their selfhood through exceptional acts of consumption. In the *London Magazine*, the Cockney trope is embraced and reframed much as Elia embraced and reframed the meaning of Lamb's potentially embarrassing stammer. Personae such as Elia and Janus Weathercock embrace the Cockney not only as a comic figure, but also as a kind of magician of consumption: one who can elevate his consumption patterns through acts of representation. Portraying Cockneys, and writing explicitly *as* Cockneys, these personae offer a positive rereading of the Cockney's obsession with appearance; they explore his acts of consumption as creative—authorial—efforts of world-shaping.

Cockney language acquires, in Elia's essays, a transformative power. By collecting and displaying the interesting characters among his acquaintance, Elia capitalizes on the entertaining value of his imagined social circle. From the catalogue of clerks at the South Sea House to Mrs. Battle, the lives and opinions of common, Cockney figures provide a source of legitimate interest for the magazine reader. Elia's portraits are sympathetic, valorizing the way these Cockneys construct their world. Captain Jackson, in an essay of the same name, demonstrates the almost magical power of the Cockney's language. At the Captain's house, convivial rituals disguise the meagerness of the food and drink:

At every meagre draught a toast must ensue, or a song. All the forms of good liquor were there, with none of the effects wanting. Shut your eyes, and you would swear a capacious bowl of punch was foaming in the centre, with beams of generous Port or Madeira radiating to it from each of the table corners. You got flustered, without knowing whence;

tipsy upon words; and reeled under the potency of his unperforming Bacchanalian encouragements. (190-1)

The Captain's apparent Cockney social gaffe—punctuating the meagre meal with toasts—actually allows him to transform how his guests perceive his hospitality. Despite his limited means, he renders them “tipsy upon words”. The Captain displays a linguistic power over his humble household goods, transforming them through imagination and art: “He was a juggler, who threw mists before your eyes—you had no time to detect his fallacies. He would say “hand me the *silver* sugar tongs;” and, before you could discover it was a single spoon, and that *plated*, he would disturb and captivate your imagination by a misnomer of “the urn” for a tea kettle; or by calling a homely bench a sofa” (191-2). Like a sort of Cockney magician, Captain Jackson displays the transformative power of language over his mundane domestic world. The shabbiness of his table setting, which might have been mocked by “Z” in *Blackwood's*, is honored by Elia in the *London*. Captain Jackson's linguistic power stands in for and gestures to Elia's. It is Elia who has transformed this everyday scene into an event at once grand and profound—and most importantly, worth consuming in a monthly magazine.

In Thomas Wainewright's “Janus Weathercock” persona, we find a more sustained portrayal of Cockney authorship in the *London*. Contributing between 1820 and 1823, Janus commented primarily on contemporary art, largely through his “Sentimentalities on the Fine Arts” series. Despite his title as art critic, much of the humor—and page space—of his contributions is devoted to detailing his writer's block, his procrastination, and finally his inspiration. Janus Weathercock is just one of many periodical personae who dramatize their own process of creation; as Richard Cronin explains, “the magazine article about writing a magazine article quickly established itself as a favorite sub-genre, especially with writers who needed to produce copy but found themselves without materials” (92). Yet Janus is an especially self-reflexive persona, often experimenting with his voice and its place in the magazine. In the first

“Sentimentality” article, for instance, Janus plays with the growing distance between the first person plural “we” of the reviews and the first person singular address that was gaining ground in the newer magazines. He pushes back against the loss of identity that the former represents: “I felt my vigorous personal identity instantly annihilated, and resolved, by some mystic process, into a part of the unimaginable plurality in unity, wherewith Editors, Reviewers, and, at present, pretty commonly Authors, clothe themselves” (*LM* 1:3 [March 1820] 286). Inserting a small pause between periodical agents (Editors, and Reviewers) and real Authors (the more exalted role to which he aspires), Janus Weathercock bucks the reviewer’s attempt at anonymity, using his Cockney pastimes and possessions to assert his personal identity in place of the first person singular:

Forthwith WE (Janus) sneaked home alone... exchanged our smart, tight-waisted, stiff-collared coat, for an easy chintz gown, with pink ribbons—lighted our new elegantly-gilt French lamp, having a ground-glass-globe painted with gay flowers and gaudy butterflies—hauled forth *Portfolio No. 9* and established ourselves on a costly Grecian couch! (*LM* 1:3 [March 1820] 286, parenthesis are Wainwright’s)

Despite the plural pronoun, Janus personalizes himself through the minute description of his attire and possessions. By means of his likes, his selection of possessions, and his mode of linguistic excess, Janus marks himself as a Cockney. The profusion of details in his description emphasizes the over-investment in clothing and décor that had been associated with the Cockneys by *Blackwood’s*.

As the article unfolds, Janus’s Cockney obsession with things proceeds at the expense of narrative content, culminating in the following list:

Fancy, comfortable reader! Imprimis, A very good-sized room. Item. A gay Brussel’s carpet, covered with garlands of flowers. Item. A fine *original* cast of the Venus de Medicis. Item. Some choice volumes in still more choice old French *maroquin*, with water-tabby-silk linings! Item. Some more vols. coated by the skill of Roger Payne, and “*our* Charles Lewis.” Item. A piano, by Tomkinson. Item. A Damascus sabre. Item. One cat. Item. A large Newfoundland Dog, friendly to the cat. Item. A few hot-house plants,

on a white-marble slab. Item. A delicious, melting love-painting, by Fuseli:—and last, not least in our dear love, *we*, myself, Janus! (*LM* 1:3 [March 1820] 285)

Syntactically, Janus's self-portrait-in-possession reads like a list of lots in an auction catalogue. And while his Cockney collection is not quite worthy of the museum, it evokes the sort of group that might be sold up to discharge a debt. He evinces confusion about authenticity (an "*original* cast"), value ("choice volumes in still more choice" bindings), and even quantity ("Item. A few hot-house plants"). His confusion is a Cockney characteristic: by collecting a bust of dubious worth or valuing his bindings above his books, Janus plays into the stereotypes about Cockney aspiration to higher-class activities like collection, and their inevitable misinterpretations. But unlike the disgusted attacks on the Cockney School, Janus Weathercock's sentimental meditations on art and possessions dwell on and reproduce the pleasures of the Cockney collector. This very act of exhaustive listing reproduces the collector's pleasure at finding "we, myself, Janus" amid his things.⁵⁰

Such Cockney pleasures are not mere self-indulgences when they appear as writerly acts in magazines like the *London*. As with Elia's stammer, these mistakes lie at the source of his writing. Janus' performance of the Cockney trope is conducted in explicit conversation with the *Blackwood's* critique of the "King of the Cockneys", Leigh Hunt. He is successively and deliberately guilty of all of Hunt's Cockney sins. Not only does he quote Hunt relentlessly, he duplicates the faults of which Hunt was so repeatedly accused. He stresses his unaristocratic education—"It is my *very* humble opinion (who am not *picture* but *print-learned*)" (*LM* 5:30 [June 1822] 549, original italics)—and his stroll through a wintry park yields the kind of eroticized scenery at which *Blackwood's* balked—"the snowdrop bent down modestly its elegant, and lady-like head, away from my rude, amorous gaze" (*LM* 1:4 [April 1820] 402). Yet

⁵⁰ This style of catalogue is repeated in his November 1822 article "The Academy of Taste for Grown Gentlemen."

these Cockney attributes are part of, rather than detractions from, his role as art critic for the *London*. As Janus closes the above recitation of his possessions, he looks haphazardly at a print in his book, and recites a couple lines from Leigh Hunt's *Rimini* and announces: "This completed the charm.—We immersed a well-seasoned prime pen into our silver inkstand" (*LM* 1:3 [March 1820] 286). Janus's possessions and his immersion in Cockney literature are positioned as the origin of his writing. These are the things and books that make him the authorial person that he is. For better or worse, the reader's enjoyment of the article will be a function of the patterns of Cockney consumption that it has described.

Cockney consumption is striking for its accessibility and mundanity. Janus's possessions are expressly average, despite the wealth of descriptive language with which he lavishes them. In fact, Cockney authorial power becomes more impressive in direct relation to the degree to which Cockney consumption becomes accessible to the average consumer. The invocation of the quotidian, as in Captain Jackson's transformation of his meal, permits the greatest performance of Cockney authorship. Food, as one of the most mundane, and everyday aspects of life, allows the Cockney author to perform on a territory closest to that of the everyday person. In one of several instances, Janus transforms an everyday meal into a mock-heroic combat. He sits down with his friend "Hyppolito" [sic] to lay into a lunch and attempt to come up with ideas for his latest column:

[A] pair of knives were imbrued up to the hilts in the partridge-flavoured gravy of a vast veal and ham pye, baked in an unfathomable *red* dish (a whimsy of ours) guarded on the side by a pack loaf *home-baked*, on the other by a fine ripe *Stilton*, and the whole amiably harmonized by a *running* accompaniment of home-brewed ale,—pale, amber-coloured, foaming,—contained in a capacious brown stone-jug, silver tipped. Soon was the fair smug face of the luncheon-tray changed—the lily, lavender-smelling cloth was covered with splinters of the Patê's stout outworks—upper and under crusts were cut sheer away from their parent load by the "griding" blade—quicksands of salt, and quagmires of mustard obscured the radiant colours of Spodes' loveliest plates. (*LM* 1:4 [April 1820] 403)

If the emphasis on the “home-baked” and “home-brewed” elements of the meal reads somewhat like an Instagram caption, we should not consider it a coincidence. Like Janus’ earlier insistence on his “*original* copy of the Venus de Medicis”, it should be read as an attempt to lend a uniqueness to the overwhelmingly average act of consumption in which the two men are engaged. While they may define themselves through their things and foods, they insist that these things and foods hold a place outside or above the commodity. More subversively, the descriptive and eventually metaphoric excess of the above feast (“quicksands of salt, quagmires of mustard”) transmits to the reader the excess of the meal more effectively than any simple quantification could. Anticipating the tradition of the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* and its parody, the “Confessions of an English Glutton”, this metaphoric excess of consumption characterizes the periodical persona. In a book review, such excesses might be cited as part of a personality, but when Janus explores them so comically and lushly, they take on a new character: the rhetorical flourishes and syntactical dexterity they entail recast that consumption as a sign of creativity, artistry—an indication of his linguistic virtuosity, if not his gustatory self-control.

Performances of gastronomy can signal not only authorship, but an understanding of the periodical market. As he eats his way through the pages of the *London*, Janus insists on the importance of eating like a Londoner while he is there. In the June 1820 number, after a trip to the theatre, he issues a cliché lament over “the age of vulgarity” in which he currently lives (*LM* 1:6 [June 1820] 630). Turning this common complaint on its head, he maligns not the contemporary understanding of the fine arts, but of eating: “It appears to us that it requireth not the hand of genius to give it a gusto for the tastes and feelings of what are called the lower orders,—rather the reverse! We want more macaroni and champagne; less boxing and bull beef” (*LM* 1:6 [June 1820] 631). Explicitly panning beef and boxing, which had become pet topics of the more ‘sporting’ *Blackwood’s Magazine* (Strachan, 221-2), Janus espouses interests more

consistent with the periodical that provides his home. He poses as the discerning drinker and eater, one whose foreign tastes indicate his cultured, metropolitan perspective. Attacking the *London's* own drama critic (Hazlitt), he explains:

Mr. Drama of the LONDON seems determined to show his readers that his stomach is hearty—that he can relish bread and cheese, and porter, which certainly are very fine things in the country, and—when we can get nothing else,—and so far, all this is very well. But surely in the centre of fashion, we might be now and then indulged with more elegant fare,—something that would suit better with the diamond rings on our fingers, the Antique Cameos in our breast-pins, our cambric pocket-handkerchief breathing forth Attargul, our pale lemon-coloured kid gloves.—Some chicken fricaseed white for instance; a bottle of Hock, or Moselle, and a glass of Maraschino. (*LM* 1:6 [June 1820] 631)

In presenting a dinner that is meant to match his carefully-chosen city attire, Janus stresses the importance of selecting a meal that is appropriate to its setting. Rather than condemning the rural meal of bread, cheese, and porter, Janus relocates it to the country. His tastes change based on his location—or perhaps, based on the periodical that prints his work. To review *London*, he admonishes Mr. Drama, you must talk and eat like a Londoner. The seeming interchangeability of Janus's choices ("Hock or Moselle or Maraschino") displays his mastery of metropolitan gastronomy. The city, after all, makes such performances of substitution possible. When, earlier in the same essay he announces to his waiter that "any thing will do—just a little chocolate, (make it thick—will ye?) a cup of good gunpowder—not too strong, for our nerves are RATHER weak, *or so*—a little scraped beef, and a few radishes—and—and—a—any cold meat that you may have in the house—ham, or beef, or a devilled kidney, *or so*—some eggs of course, and—that will do!", he displays precisely the mix of particularity and feigned unconcern that metropolitan dining affords the savvy consumer (*LM* 1:6 [June 1820] 628). By adapting consumption to its location, Janus displays the adaptability of the Cockney author, who can transform himself through his food to suit every occasion and location.

In developing the Cockney author trope, the *London Magazine* makes an important revision to the personal attacks published against Hunt, Hazlitt, Keats and others in *Blackwood's Magazine*. Subverting the personality's minute focus on the everyday, on food, on social rituals, and on personal consumption of consumer goods, it identifies them as a place for the descriptive, virtuosic performance of authorial selfhood. Under this model, writing about everyday realities such as food—even consuming food at all—becomes a Cockney pursuit. The Cockney author, as the everyday person, models how the living author can distinguish himself from the masses. The living author is the savvy, Cockney consumer rather than the complaining reviewer. His stance is less to tell us what to avoid than to regale us with what he enjoys—as Janus Weathercock himself declares: “We have nothing to say to any gentleman who merely tells us what he does not like, for that is his affair, not ours. (*LM* 1:6 [June 1820] 695). The stance of enjoyment, and of consumption, is integral to the model of the living author that the periodical personae elaborate. Paradoxically, it is this consumption and enjoyment that will mark him as a producer—superior to the cannibalistic reviewer, who eats nothing but other writers.

V: *Blackwood's* and the New Cockaigne

Cockaigne is first and foremost about eating.

—Herman Pleij, *Dreaming of Cockaigne*

Cockneys—and their self-creation through food—surface unexpectedly in *Blackwood's Magazine*. Despite the magazine's emphatic rejection of the Cockney School, the Cockney trope is reasserted among its contributors. The *Noctes Ambrosianae*—a series of dialogues in which the various personae of contributors and editor gather to eat, drink, gossip, and debate—provides a lush portrait of how the *Maga* imagines the social world of the periodical. This is an overwhelmingly masculine world; during its first 8 years, less than five percent of the magazine's contributors were women and the *Noctes Ambrosianae* reflect this, furnishing the reader with

what Lisa Niles calls “the ultimate bachelor party” (103, 115). Within this masculine sphere, the Cockney reappears as a contributor to, rather than an enemy of, the periodical. With self-deprecating humor, the first number in the series acknowledges the place of the Cockney in the magazine’s coterie. As editor Christopher North and contributor and adjutant Odoherly discuss:

ODOHERTY: They [the Cockneys] are at *bottom*, with very few exceptions, the same dirty radicals,—meanly bred,—uneducated adventurers, who have been thrown upon literature only by having failed as attorneys, apothecaries, painters, schoolmasters, preachers, grocers—

NORTH: Or Adjutants—ha! ha! (*BEM* 11:61 [March 1822] 362)

Diagnosing the professional failures that lead to Cockney authorship, this exchange results in North identifying his own contributor (Odoherly) as one of their number. Despite the difference in political perspective, Cockney Hunt or Hazlitt and Odoherly are united by their shared profession as periodical writers.

Yet the connection of *Blackwood’s* to the Cockney figure runs deeper than the shared social status of its contributors; *Blackwood’s* undertakes a project that embraces and rehabilitates the Cockney construction of identity through food. In order to understand this, we will need return to one particular insult levelled at Leigh Hunt: that he is the “King of Cockaigne”, first deployed in May 1818’s “Letter from Z. to Leigh Hunt”. Punning on the word Cockney, *Blackwood’s* invokes the medieval myth of the land of Cockaigne, a working-man’s paradise of food, drink, and idleness, perhaps now most familiar in its twentieth-century American iteration, the Big Rock Candy Mountain. It is a place of perfect leisure and indulgence, with medieval accounts depicting abundant food and alcohol, usually accompanied by animals offering themselves up to the inhabitants, already cooked and ready to be eaten. Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s 1567 painting “Land of Cockaigne”, for instance, depicts a pig ambulating with a knife in its side and an egg bearing its own spoon. Alongside its abundant and ambulatory food, Cockaigne also

features leisure; printed versions include descriptions of a pay-scale based on idleness. Cockaigne is a working-man's paradise: as Herman Pleij points out, the traditional foods of the medieval aristocracy are conspicuously absent from the litanies of culinary pleasures (95).

The choice of Cockaigne as the kingdom of the Cockneys is at surface unsurprising—the pun appears to drive the choice of name. But at least one *Blackwood's* contributor was familiar with the Cockaigne myth: James Hogg, in his solo periodical endeavor *The Spy* had lamented that “There is alas! in no corner of this world a *pays de cocagne*” (No. 43 [Saturday June 22 1811] 427). In fact, the general suspicion of lower-class leisure displayed by the Cockney School attacks complements the historical meaning of Cockaigne as a working man's paradise. Yet the finer attributes of Cockaigne—especially its representation of gastronomic and alcoholic excess—appear just as frequently in *Blackwood's* as in the Cockney publications. In fact, *Blackwood's Magazine's* own lush imagery of excess is much more fitting to the Land of Cockaigne than Hunt's asceticism. A frequent attack on Hunt actually hinged on the sparseness of his diet: he is accused of the dangerously unmasculine habit of lettuce-eating. In September 1819, for instance, “Z” challenges the healthiness of his suppers: “[Hunt] is always writing about headaches, bile, tea, and suppers of boiled eggs and lettuces, and so persuading his male subscribers that he is ‘one of us’” (*BEM* 5 [September 1819] 641).⁵¹ The fabulous indulgences of the *Noctes Ambrosianae*, along with the nightmare excesses of the “Confessions of an English Glutton”, signal *Blackwood's* as the location of a Cockney performance of consumption.

In his January 1823 parody of De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Thomas Grattan explores the literary possibilities of gastronomic excess in the “Confessions of an

⁵¹ Hunt's medicinal eating is represented as a false performance of masculinity—the implication here being that he does not eat these things because he is—but because he is not—a man, and wants to encourage others to give up their manhood in a similar fashion.

English Glutton”. Like the Opium-Eater, the Glutton confesses the development of his particular vice, all the while reveling in the literary excesses to which it prompts him. It drives his education: “the whole turn of my studies,” he explains, “was bent towards descriptions of feasts and festivals. I devoured all authors, ancient or modern, who bore at all upon my pursuit. Appetite, mental as well as bodily, grew by what it fed on; and I continually chewed, as it were, the cud of my culinary knowledge” (*BEM* 13:72 [January 1823] 89). The Glutton’s eating and reading are intimately connected, reinforcing each other as twin indulgences. In his inevitable turn to published writing, this twinned process of eating and reading leads him to use feasts as an opportunity to explore genre. Thus, on sitting down to one particularly sumptuous multicourse meal, the Glutton presents his degustation as an epic:

I seized my knife and fork, and plunged in *medias res*. Never shall I forget the flavor of the first morsel—it was sublime! But oh! it was, as I may say, the last; for losing, in the excess of over-enjoyment, all presence of mind and management of mouth, I attacked, without economy or method, my inanimate victim. [...] I rushed, as it were, upon my prey—slashed it right and left, through crackling, stuffing, body, and bones. I flung aside the knife and fork—seized in my hands the passive animal with indiscriminate voracity—trust whole ribs and limbs at once into my mouth—crammed the delicious ruin by wholesale down my throat, until at last my head began to swim [...] I lost all reason and remembrance, and fell, in that state, fairly under the table. (*BEM* 13:72 [January 1823] 89)

Not only echoing De Quincey’s excessive opium debauches, but Janus Weathercock’s mock-heroic lunches, the Glutton’s descriptions allow him to explore kinds of writing through kinds of eating. The excess and violence of his indulgences provide a site of fantasy, where the daily consumption of the Cockney writer is expanded to nightmare proportions. The Glutton one-ups the Cockney consumer with the breadth and violence of his consumption, pursuing it even to the point of bodily collapse.

In the *Noctes*, meanwhile, the excesses of eating and drinking are presented as even more literal elements of periodical production. Detailing the debauched dinners of Kit North et. al. at

Ambrose's Tavern, the *Noctes* make the space of eating and drinking the defining space of the magazine coterie. Unlike explicitly domestic or commercial spaces, the tavern provides a liminal zone where the meaning of writing, publishing, and consumption can be mutually worked out. As North and his contributors drink and eat to excess, they hatch plans for new articles, debate tidbits of literary gossip, and in general conduct the business of the periodical. As with Janus Weathercock and the English Glutton, overconsumption and literary production go hand in hand. North announces in the first *Noctes* that he "can never write without a bottle beside me", while the contributor Odoherty "prefer[s] smoking, on the whole" (*BEM* 11:62 (March 1822) 373).⁵² A particularly visually striking example of gastronomic excess can be found in the *Noctes* of April 1830, where North, Timothy Tickler, the Ettrick Shepherd, and the visiting English Opium-Eater sit down to a four-course feast of soup, fish, flesh, and fowl. The article includes four different schematics depicting the table and the arrangement of dishes upon it for each course, devoting a great deal of visual emphasis to the meal. The excess of the feast—featuring more than a dozen dishes per course for its four participants—vividly indicates the sort of mythical, Rabelaisian consumption in which the party at Ambrose's is imagined to indulge.

⁵² That such drunken literary performances are explicitly Cockney is driven home by the rhymes of the drinking song that closes this first number. The forced polysyllabic rhymes in the song recall Croker's accusation that Keats was rhyming by playing at *bouts rimés* (Keach, 184). The drinking songs thereby links Cockney poetry, drunkenness, and the space of periodical production:

His face was no ways beautiful,
 For with small-pox 'twas scarr'd across;
 And the shoulders of the ugly dog
 Were almost double a yard across. (*BEM* 11:62 [March 1822] 370)

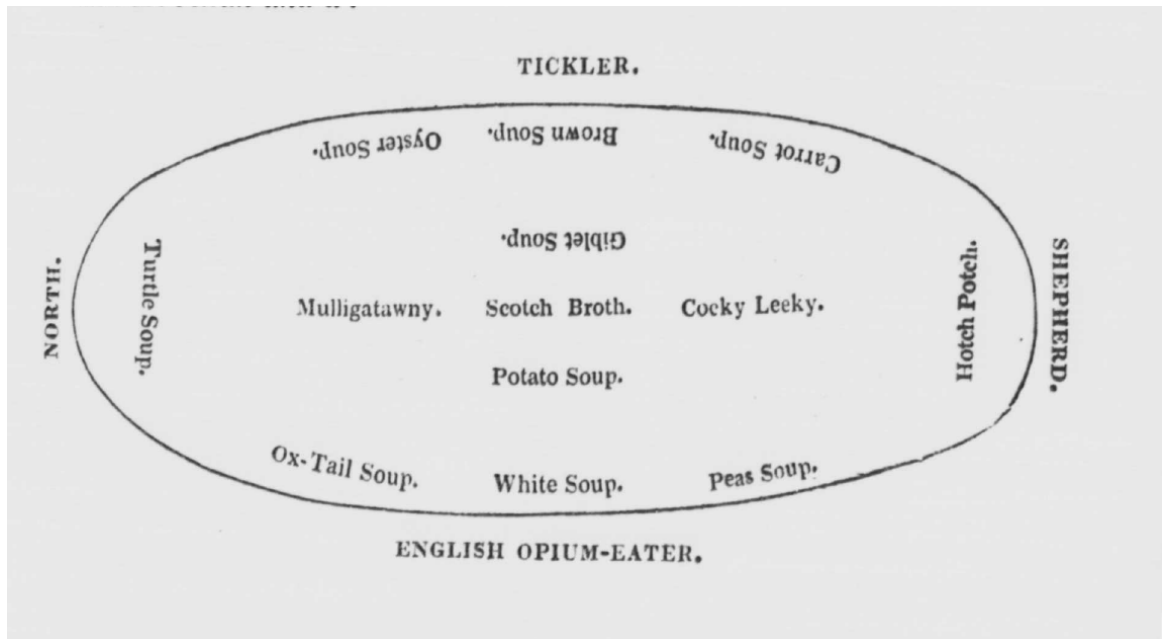


Fig 5. “First Course.—Soup” (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 659)

Not only the excess of food, but also the emphasis on local, peasant foodways, strengthens the connection between Blackwoodian feasting and Cockaigne. Local specialties such as hotch potch and cocky leaky are given prominent place both on the table and in the reported dinner conversation. Over-consumption provides the hallmark of the manly Blackwoodian writer. The Ettrick Shepherd, for instance, gobbles his meal indiscriminately, with a gusto that prevents him from even tasting it:

SHEPHERD: Hae I eaten anither dish o’ hotch-potch, think ye, sirs, without bein’ aware o’t?

TICKLER: No, James—North changed the fare upon you, and you have devoured, in a fit of absence, about half-a-bushel of peas.

SHEPHERD. I’m glad it was nae carrots—for they aye give me a sair belly. (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 663)

The Shepherd’s ravenous indulgence leads him to risk compromising his physiology by accidentally consuming the carrots he finds unwholesome. It is rather easy to imagine a sequel in

which this feast provides a spur to the kind of indulgent meditations on illness seen in the work of Elia or the English Glutton. The more respectable Kit North, for his part, interrupts the fish course by choking on a pike bone, suggesting a mode of eating that is not much more refined than that of the rustic Shepherd (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 674). Against the comic excesses of the true Blackwoodians, the consumption of the more worldly, *Londonified* Opium-Eater appears pretentious and stilted. He confuses the hotch-potch with the cocky leeky and expresses his own preference for the foreign “vermicelli” (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 662). Each performance of eating activates different registers of the Cockney trope: the Shepherd’s self-indulgence, North’s embarrassing, attention-grabbing body, and the Opium-Eater’s pretentiousness. It is impossible to eat, it seems, without exposing one’s Cockney status.

Long before the publication of the *Notes*, the Romantic period already understood certain kinds of eating as representing certain kinds of writing. Reviewing work had long been understood as cannibalistic, with Byron memorably cementing the connection when he deemed Francis Jeffrey “the great anthropophagus” (153). *Blackwood’s* extended this metaphor, connecting different writing styles with different diets. In the *Noctes* of March 1823, Odoherty explains: “In point of fact, I write for this or that periodical, according to the state of my stomach or spirits, (which is the same thing,) when I sit down. Am I flat, I tip my Grandmother a bit of prose. Am I dunned into sourness – I cut up some deistical fellow for the Quarterly” (*BEM* 13:74 [March 1823] 82-3). Collapsing the stomach and spirits, diet becomes a powerful metaphor to explain the variability in style and attitude necessitated by periodical authorship.⁵³ The four courses of the April 1830 feast provide a powerful template of the way *Blackwood’s* connects proper eating with proper writing.

⁵³ Perhaps, too, it goes to explain why Ritson and Shelley’s vegetarianism are seen as signs of a problematic level of political commitment.

As North & Co. eat their way through each course, moving from soup to fish to fowl to flesh, the tone of their discussion mirrors the increasing carnivorousness of their fare. Over the course of the meal, the dialogue turns more and more to the workings of the publishing world; with more meat comes more gossip and personalities. Thus, the soup course is spent mostly in discussing art and the fish in a recounting of one of the Shepherd's adventures, while the properly carnivorous flesh and fowl courses give rise to a sustained attack on Southey, rude personalities of people like the author of "The Exclusives", and a full-on attack on Scottish character by the Opium-Eater.⁵⁴ Connecting this increasingly indulgent feast with the magazine's tone, the *Noctes* endorse excess and carnivorousness as positive signs of the manly authorship of the periodical writer and variety of consumption as analogous to a keen understanding of the literary marketplace.

The adoption of the excessive gastronomy of Cockaigne in the service of a conservative publication is not something that would surprise medieval scholar Herman Pleij. In his discussion of the differences between Cockaigne and other medieval utopias, Pleij stresses its non-revolutionary character. Cockaigne and utopia are at opposite ends of the political spectrum, he argues, Cockaigne being "concerned not so much with satire—and certainly not with

⁵⁴ The Shepherd declares that "I really thocht "The Exclusives" no sae meikle amiss, considerin' that the author's a butler—or rather—I ax his pardon—a gentleman's gentleman, that is to say, a valley-de-sham. To be sure, it was rather derogatory to his dignity, and disgracefu' to the character which he had brocht frae his last place—to marry his mater's cast-off kept-mistress; but then, on the other haun', she was a woman o' pairts, and o' some sma' education, and was a great help to him in his spellin' and grammar, and figures o' speech" (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 688). This attack smacks of all the usual personality trappings, and is dropped in in a roving series of comments of different books and publishers with a cruel casualness. In the case of the conflict over Scottish character, the English Opium-Eater clashes with Hogg, and trots out a classic physiognomic personality of the Scots as his attack:

OPIMUM EATER: ... a Scotchman—no offence, I hope, gentlemen—being apparently human, with sandy hair—high cheek bones—light-blue eyes—wide mouth—

SHEPHERD: Aiblins wi' buck-teenth like mine—and oh! pray, do tell us, sir, for we're verra ignorant, and it's a subject of great importance, what sort o' a nose? (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 691)

revolution—as with cathartic compensation aimed at allaying fears arising from the existing order, without any thought of doing away with that order” (294). In the medieval Cockaigne tradition: “there is no suggestion whatever of new laws or an alternative order but rather the hope of being allowed to wallow in ideal circumstances of abundance and idleness within the existing system” (294). For Pleij, then, Cockaigne’s “function is more like that of a safety valve, reducing social tension to an acceptable level” (406). Pleij’s analysis provides an important caution to the radical reading of Cockaigne-like excess. The gastronomic excess in *Blackwood’s* provides just such a release-valve. When the *Maga* critiqued Leigh Hunt for a combination of ascetic gastronomic habits and sexual irregularity, it proposed a potential correlation between the two: failure to indulge in more benign excesses may be a sign that such impulses are likely to come out somewhere else. It is by this principle that Hunt’s “everlasting tea-drinking” can be conjoined with his lust: Hunt’s “love of the country”, “Z” explains, “hangs on one great principle—*every grove has its nymph*, and that is enough for the author of *Rimini*” (*BEM* 6:31 [October 1819] 73).

Ambrose’s Tavern functions to produce a new Cockaigne, which, unlike the kind of social isolation and revolutionary potential expressed in the coterie of Cockney poets, allows for a release of antisocial feelings and behaviors through comedy and publication, creating a collaborative comedic product that reinforces social stability. The differences between Scotland and England, for instance, are used in the case of the April 1830 feast to produce periodical copy. When the Shepherd and the English Opium-Eater debate whether “the English—as a people [...] are slave to the passion of the palate—epicures and gluttons in one” and are “fonder—prooder they canna be—o’ rost-beef and plumm-pudden, than the Scotch o’ brose and haggis” the Shephard insists that “this denner—which you wud bring forrit as a cowp-de-grace argumentum at ony man in proof o’the Scotch being’ fonder o’gude eatin’ that the English—was provided wi’ a’ its Coorses—no abune the half o’ them’s come yet —entirely, though no exclusively—FOR

YOU”—A claim hilariously contradicted by the overindulgence of both North and the Ettrick Shepherd (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 692).

Performed as a disagreement over national identity, this argument reveals itself to be about the concept of persona. The feast, despite the Shepherd and North’s obvious gustatory excess, is dedicated to the fastidious Opium-Eater. By providing the occasion for the Opium-Eater and the Shepherd to disagree, it allows for the development of personae rather than the regulation of a national contest. It enacts, on a smaller scale, the kind of mutually-beneficial antagonism on which periodicals depended: “Battles between periodicals might seem divisive but they could also be mutually productive. Such battles might even be thought essential to the way writing in magazines functioned” (Stewart 2011, 56). The resolution of the national argument signals its real function. The argument closes not with the English Opium-Eater’s rebuttal of the Shepherd’s claims but rather with his offer of an article, “Comparative Estimate of the English and Scottish Character”, to North for publication in *Blackwood’s*. The conflict serves to bring the selected personae together in a publishing venture. The conviviality of the *Noctes* depends on such conflict, as does the writing of the periodical persona. The food is generative, even representative of the writing that they undertake.

Both Cockaigne and Ambrose’s can only function as this kind of release valve because of their use of the codes of fictionality. In his discussion of medieval Cockaigne, Pleij stresses that

It was precisely Cockaigne’s strictly fictional and unreal nature that gave everyone the license to search for a maximum of satisfaction, and this is why the quest for spiritual weapons and compensation in this dreamland and no other could have such a great impact on one’s personal well-being in everyday life. None of it was true anyway. Why should anyone get worked up about the amusements on offer in Cockaigne? It didn’t even exist! And this, of course, is why it has to be invented. (427)

In other words, the explicit fictionality of Cockaigne is an essential element in debarbing the indulgences depicted within it. This is especially important with regards to deployment of

personae in *Blackwood's*. While the attacks on the Cockney School insist that bad poems are representative of real bodies and their behaviors, the *Noctes* stress the fictionality of their content. Precisely by bringing in real-world, unauthorized guest-stars such as the newly-crowned King George IV (September 1822) or an off-brand Byron (July 1822), the *Noctes* draw attention to their fantastical nature. The constant tension between the real and unreal in the *Noctes* makes any illusion of their literal truth impossible. The very physicality of the Cockaigne image is then used as the sign of unreality, a carnivalesque wish-fulfillment meant to reinforce social stability. The only real action to which the *Noctes* give rise is the production of more fictions—in this case, the Opium-Eater's never-to-be-written article on Scottish character.

The Cockaigne to which the *Blackwood's* originally consigned Hunt is a place of social exile. Hunt, Keats, and Hazlitt are in a Cockaigne where the only other people they can meet are other Cockneys; that is to say, they can only leave Cockaigne as published authors. In such a model, authorship represents a dangerous transgression that threatens to disjoin the author from his physical and social place in society. The conservative response of the Cockney School attacks “attempt[s] to isolate the Hunt circle as an other in terms of status, rank, and cultural literacy”, employing negative reviews prevent the works from circulating (Cox, 27). But if we look at Cockaigne as a set of behaviors, then we find it as much at Ambrose's tavern as on Hampstead Heath. In this New Cockaigne, authorship entails skillfully deployed, almost anarchic imagery, used to manufacture the magazine author as a sort of mythic figure who can indulge in practices beyond the normal and remain untainted by them. The author becomes a sort of Rabelaisian hero who can allow us to safely explore a transgressive physicality. By drawing constant attention to the fictionality of this pose, the *Noctes* represent the living author as an able performer of identities, self-consciously manipulating the world.

Where *Blackwood's* exceeds the insights of the *London* is in the suggestion that this can only be a collaborative, and therefore periodical, project. The fish course of April 1830 provides a view of just what kind of text the personae can collectively produce. During this course, the Shepherd recounts a personal misadventure of being chased naked through a field by a bull after a failed romantic escapade. The Opium-Eater takes this anecdote and transforms it into a meditation on poetry:

In your Flight, Mr Hogg, there were visibly and audibly concentrated all the attributes of the highest Poetry. First, freedom of the will; for self-impelled you ascended the animal: Secondly, the impulse, though immediately consequent upon, and proceeding from, one of fear, was yet an impulse of courage. [...] Thirdly, though you were during your whole flight so far passive as that you yielded to the volition of the creature, yet were you likewise, during your whole course so far active, that you *guided*, as it appears, the motions, which it was beyond your power to control. (*BEM* 27:165 [April 1830] 672)

Here, the ridiculous antics of the Shepherd, complete with all the low humour of the naked body, are transfigured into a working metaphor of the poet's action under inspiration. The combinations of active, observing mind and passive surrender to circumstances is one that does not feel particularly out of place among other, more legitimate Romantic accounts of the poet's work, such as Keats' negative capability. But by producing precisely this sort of familiar representation of poetic composition out of such an ungraceful experience, the writers of the *Noctes*—meaning at once the diegetic authors, Shepherd and the Opium-Eater, and the literal authors, John Wilson et. al.—undermine the poetic stance and replace it with the periodical one: it is out of the bodily, the comic, and the ridiculous that the periodical writer works. On its own, the Opium-Eater's reading of the scene reproduces the period's rhetoric around poetic creation, but enfolded into the convivial atmosphere of Ambrose's, it participates in a layered *performance* of the production of poetic discourse. This performance, that the periodical makes possible, highlights the power of the collaborative text (both literally and diegetically) to allow the comic and at times risqué

realities of everyday life to relate to poetry in manner more sophisticated than that of the Cockney School.

The *Noctes*—as a collaboration of personae, understood as rooted in their rituals of food and daily life—provides a view of the Cockney as author that elevates the meaning of gossip and coterie. By embracing these embodied, gluttonous, at times ridiculous personae, *Blackwood's* and its ilk exalts their mundane, often comic personhood as the material for authorial performances. As with Janus Weathercock and his nineteenth-century Instagrams of his dinner, or an ailing Elia or Opium-Eater, periodical personae challenge the boundaries of the publishable and hold up a kind of virtuoso performance of the quotidian the living author's greatest asset. The living author, as performed by the literary magazine, is a figure capable of taking the most quotidian or embarrassing aspects of life and elevating them through publication and collaboration. Living authors embrace the culture of personality, insisting that the bodily experience of indulgence or illness is not a shameful defect but an opportunity for the performance of self. Through their combination of average experience and superlative description, they produce *exactly* the kind of author, and the kind of publishing world, of which the *Quarterly* and the *Edinburgh* were so afraid.

Works Cited

- A Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland; comprising Literary Memoirs and Anecdotes of their Lives; and a Chronological Register of their Publications, with the Number of Editions Printed; including Notices of some Foreign Writers whose Works have been occasionally published in England. Illustrated by a Variety of Communications from Persons of the First Eminence in the World of Letters.* London: Henry Colburn, 1816.
- A Letter to the Young Gentlemen of the Edinburgh Review. By Senex.* London: Printed for J. Hatchard, bookseller to her Majesty, 190, opposite Albany House, Piccadilly. 1809.
- Allard, James Robert. *Romanticism, Medicine, and the Poet's Body*. Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2007.
- Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed Leitch et. al. New York: Norton, 2001. 1466-70.
- Bennett, Andrew. *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
- Bernstein, Charles. *Attack of the Difficult Poems: Essays and Inventions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Best, Stephen and Marcus, Sharon. "Surface Reading: An Introduction." *Representations*. Vol. 108. No. 1 (Fall 2009): 1-21.
- Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Edinburgh: Blackwood's, 1817.
- [Boswell, Sir Alexander]. *Epistle to the Edinburgh Reviewers*. Edinburgh: Printed by Mundell and Son. 1803.
- British Review and London Critical Journal*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1811.

- Butler, Marilyn. "Culture's medium: the role of the review." *Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*. Ed. Stuart Curran. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. 120-47.
- Byron. *The Life and Writings of Lord Byron*. London: J. Robin and Co., 1825.
- Cafarelli, Annette Wheeler. *Prose in the Age of the Poets: Romanticism and Biographical Narrative from Johnson to De Quincey*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.
- Camlot, Jason. "Prosing Poetry: *Blackwood's* and Generic Transposition, 1820-1840." *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine*. Eds. Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 149-60.
- Chandler, James. "Representative Men, Spirits of the Age, and Other Romantic Types." *Romantic Revolutions: Criticism and Theory*. Eds. Kenneth R. Johnston, Gilbert Chaitin, Karen Hanson, and Herbert Marks. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990, 104-132.
- Chartier, Roger. *The Author's Hand and the Printer's Mind*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014.
- Christensen, Jerome. "'Like a Guilty Thing Surprised': Deconstruction, Coleridge, and the Apostasy of Criticism." *Critical Inquiry*. 12:4 (Summer 1986): 769-787.
- Christie, William. *The Edinburgh Review in the Literary Culture of Romantic Britain: Mammoth and Megalonyx*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009.
- Clive, John Leonard. *Scotch Reviewers: The Edinburgh Review 1802-1815*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1957.
- Clymer, Lorna. "Cromwell's Head and Milton's Hair: Corpse Theory in Spectacular Bodies of the Interregnum." *The Eighteenth Century*. 40:2 (Summer 1999): 91-112.
- Coleridge, S. T. *Biographia Literaria*. London: Everyman's Library, 1965.

- Cowper, William. *The Poems of William Cowper*. Vol III. Ed. John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp: 64-5.
- Cox, Jeffrey. *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Cronin, Richard. *Paper Pellets*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010.
- Dart, Gregory. "The Cockney Moment." *The Cambridge Quarterly*. 32:3 (2003): 203-23.
- De Grazia, Margreta. *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Demata, Massimiliano and Duncan Wu. "Introduction." *British Romanticism and the Edinburgh Review*. Eds. Massimiliano Demata and Duncan Wu. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002: 1-12.
- De Quincey, Thomas. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. New York: New American Library, 1966.
- . *Works of Thomas De Quincey*. Ed. Frederick Burwick. Vol III. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000.
- . *Works of Thomas De Quincey*. Ed. Alina Clej. Vol X. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003.
- D'Israeli, Isaac. *Isaac D'Israeli on Books*. Ed. Marvin Spevack. London: British Library Press, 2004.
- Edinburgh Review*. Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1802.
- The Examiner*. London: Leigh and John Hunt, 1808.
- Feather, John. *Publishing, Piracy, and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*. London, Mansell: 1994.

- Ferris, Ina. *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Flynn, Philip. "Beginning *Blackwood's*: The Right Mix of Dulce and Utile." *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine*. Eds. Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 23-33.
- Forster, Antonia. "Book Reviewing." *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*. Vol. 5. 1695-1830. Eds. Michael Suarez and Michael Turner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Leitch et. al. New York: Norton, 2001. 1622-36.
- Gallagher, Catherine. "The Rise of Fictionality." *The Novel, Volume 1*. Ed. Franco Moretti. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. 336-63.
- Gamer, Michael. "Assimilating the Novel: Reviews and Collection." *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*. Vol II. Eds. Peter Garside and Karen O'Brien. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 531-49.
- . *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- . *Romanticism, Self-Canonization, and the Business of Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2016.
- . "Waverley and the Object of (Literary) History." *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly* 70:4 (December 2009): 495-525.

Gentleman's Magazine. London: Edward Cave, 1731.

Gill, Stephen. *William Wordsworth: A Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Gilmartin, Kevin. *Writing Against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790-1832*.
Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.

Goldsmith, Jason. "Celebrity and the spectacle of nation." *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*. Ed. Tom Mole. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 21-40.

Hazlitt, William. *A Letter to William Gifford, Esq. From William Hazlitt, Esq.* London: Printed for John Miller, Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly. 1819.

---. *The Spirit of the Age*. Grasmere: Wordsworth Trust, 2004.

Higgins, David Minden. "Celebrity, politics and the rhetoric of genius." *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850*. Ed. Tom Mole. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 41-59.

Hofkosh, Sonia. *Sexual Politics and the Romantic Author*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Hogg, James. *The Spy*. Ed. Gillian Hughes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Holmes, Richard. *Coleridge: Early Visions*. New York: Viking, 1990.

Imperial Magazine. London: Samuel Drew, 1819.

Jeffrey, Francis. *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review. By Francis Jeffrey, now one of the Judges of the Court of Session in Scotland. In four volumes*. London: Printed for Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, Paternoster-row, 1844.

- Keach, William. "Cockney Couplet: Keats and the Politics of Style." *Studies in Romanticism* 25:2 (Summer 1986): 182-196
- Klancher, Jon. *The Making of English Reading Audiences: 1790-1832*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988.
- Lamb, Charles. *Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*. Ed. E. V. Lucas. Volume II. New York: AMS Press, 1968.
- London Magazine*. London: Baldwin, Craddock & Joy, 1820.
- Mahoney, Charles. *Romantics and Renegades: The Poetics of Political Reaction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Malthus, Thomas. *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. Electronic Scholarly Publishing Project, 1998.
- McGann, Jerome. *The Romantic Ideology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Mellor, Anne Kostelanetz. "Were Women Writers 'Romantics'?" *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly*. 62:4 (December 2001): 393-405
- Mole, Tom. "'Blackwood's' 'Personalities'." *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine*. Eds. Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 89-100.
- . *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007
- Monthly Review*. London: Ralph Griffiths, 1749.
- Moretti, Franco. *Graphs, Maps, Trees*. New York: Verso, 2007.

Morrison, Robert and Roberts, Daniel Sanjiv. "A Passage to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*."

Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine. Eds. Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts
New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 1-19.

Murphy, Peter T. "Impersonation and Authorship in Romantic Britain." *ELH* 59, no. 3 (1992):
625-649.

New Monthly Magazine. London: Henry Colburn, 1814.

Niles, Lisa. "'May the married by single and the single be happy:' *Blackwood's*, the *Maga* for the
Single Man." *Romantic Periodicals and Print Culture*. Ed. Kim Wheatley. London:
Frank Cass, 2003. 102-21.

Pleij, Herman. *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life*. Trans. Diane
Webb. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Price, Leah. *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
2000.

Quarterly Review. London: John Murray, 1809.

Retrospective Review. London: Charles and Henry Baldwin, 1820.

Ring, John. *The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review, alias the Stinkpot of Literature*. London:
Printed for H. D. Symonds, Paternoster Row; and John Hatchard, Piccadilly, 1807.

Robertson, Fiona. *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction*. Oxford:
Clarendon Press, 1994.

Roper, Derek. *Reviewing Before the Edinburgh 1788-1802*. Newark: University of Delaware
Press, 1978.

Rose, Mark. *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993.

Russett, Margaret. *Fictions and Fakes: Forging Romantic Authenticity, 1760-1845*. Cambridge UP, 2006.

Schoenfield, Mark. *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The 'Literary Lower Empire'*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Scott, Walter. *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*. Ed. H.J.C. Grierson. London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1933.

---. *Lives of the Novelists*. Philadelphia: Carey & Lea. 1825.

Speck, W. A. *Robert Southey: Entire Man of Letters*. New Have: Yale UP, 2006.

St Clair, William. *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Stewart, David. "Blackwoodian Allusion and the Culture of Miscellaneity." *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine*. Eds. Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 113-24.

---. *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.

Stillinger, Jack. *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*. New York: Oxford UP, 1991.

Strachan, John. "John Wilson and Sport". *Romanticism and Blackwood's Magazine*. Eds. Robert Morrison and Daniel S. Roberts. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 215-26.

Strout, Alan Lang. "A Study in Periodical Patchwork: John Wilson's "Recreations of Christopher North" 1842." *The Modern Language Review*. 38:2 (April 1843): 88-105.

Suarez, Michael. "Towards a bibliometric analysis of the surviving record, 1701-1800.

Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 5, Eds. Suarez et. al. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 39-65.

Thelwall, John. *A Letter to Francis Jeffray, Esq. on certain calumnies and misrepresentations in the Edinburgh Review; the conduct of certain individuals, on the night of Mr. Thelwall's Probationary Lecture, at Bernard Rooms, Edinburgh; and The Ignorance of THE NEW CRITICAL JUNTO of the simplest elements of English Composition and English Grammar: With an Appendix, containing Outlines of a Course of Lectures on the Science and Practice of Elocution*. Edinburgh: Printed for the Author by John Turnbull, High-Street; And Sold by the Booksellers in Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Liverpool, Manchester, &c., 1804.

Watson, Nicola J. "Trans-figuring Byronic Identity." *At the limits of romanticism: essays in cultural, feminist, and materialist criticism*. Eds. Mary A. Favret and Nicola J. Watson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 185-206.

West, Shearer. "Wilkes's Squint: Synecdochic Physiognomy and Political Identity in Eighteenth-Century Print Culture." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33:1 (1999): 65-84.

Wheatley, Kim. *Romantic Feuds*. Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2013

---. "Introduction." *Romantic Periodicals and Print Culture*. Ed. Kim Wheatley. London: Frank Cass, 2003. 1-18.

Wordsworth, William. *A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816.

Wu, Duncan. *William Hazlitt: The First Modern Man*. Oxford UP, 2008.